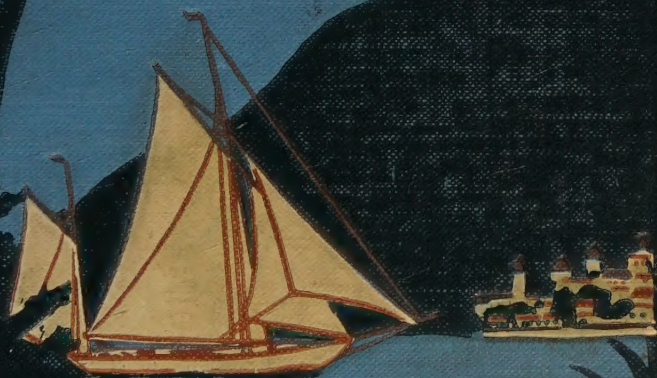


THE CRUISE OF THE CORMORANT



A. HYATT VERRILL

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Over all hung a thick pall of black smoke [Page 242]

THE CRUISE OF THE CORMORANT

BY

A. HYATT VERRILL

AUTHOR OF *Porto Rico Past and Present, An American Crusoe,*
Harper's Book for Young Naturalists, etc.

ILLUSTRATED



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The Cruise of the Cormorant

THE CRUISE OF THE CORMORANT

CHAPTER I

THREE CHEERS FOR THE SPANISH MAIN

IT was a bleak January day, and New York's streets were covered with a thick blanket of snow, while the rumble and noise of traffic were hushed and muffled by a miniature blizzard that buffeted the pedestrians on the avenue and howled among the leafless trees in the park across the way.

Within the library of Mr. Rogers' home, it was warm and cozy, and before the blazing open fire Paul Rogers and his cousin, Harry Thurston, were snuggled comfortably in the big leather chairs, each absorbed in a magazine.

"I do wish Uncle Charles wouldn't sell her," suddenly exclaimed Harry, looking up from the mid-winter yachting paper he was reading. "We've been counting on having such a fine cruise in her next summer."

"I know it," replied Paul; "but father says he can't afford to keep such a big boat now that he

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just cruises around the coast, and a little gasoline cruiser would do just as well. Besides, the price he has been offered is more than he's likely to get another year. But I *do* hate to think of giving up the old *Cormorant*; she's such a comfortable old craft."

"Yes, and it's so much more fun to sail than to go chugging about by motor," added Harry. "Of course, *you* don't mind so much, for you love to tinker with an engine; but me for sails every time."

"Well, even a motor is a lot better than no boat at all, Harry; but it's a long time till cruising weather again, anyway. Golly! How would you like to be a sailor a day like this?"

As Paul finished speaking, the door swung open, and Mr. Rogers stepped briskly into the room, rubbing his hands, and with nose and ears scarlet with the cold.

"Phew, but it is cold!" he said, stepping to the fireplace. Turning his back to the blaze, he announced: "Well, boys, I've sold the *Cormorant*."

"Oh, Uncle Charles! And we were just hoping you wouldn't!" exclaimed the two boys.

Mr. Rogers smiled, and, seating himself before the fire, glanced at the two with a twinkle in his eyes. "How would you like a last cruise in her this weather?" he asked presently.

"People don't go cruising in blizzards," said Paul sagely.

"Uncle Charles, you've got something up your sleeve; I can tell by your eyes," replied the observant Harry.

Mr. Rogers laughed. "Don't they, though, Paul! That shows how much of a yachtsman you are, my boy. If you don't believe I'm in earnest, just run over to the basin to-morrow and look at the *Cormorant*. If you do, you'll find she's being fitted out in a hurry. Yes, Harry, I've got something up my sleeve, as you guessed, and I won't tease you any more. I'm going to take the old boat on our last cruise, and I expect to sail next Tuesday. I say 'our cruise' because I'm going to take you boys along. You'll have to lose a little schooling, I know; but I think the cruise will be of more educational value than the school, and I need your help, besides. I've sold the *Cormorant* to Captain Perkins, who lives down in Barbados, and I've agreed to deliver the yacht to him; and so we sail for the West Indies next week."

"Oh, but that's bully!" cried Paul.

"Three cheers for the Spanish Main!" shouted Harry.

"I thought you'd like the scheme," said Mr. Rogers. "But come, you've only a week to get ready, and there's lots to be talked over and done. There's the bell now; run along and get ready for

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the table, and after dinner we'll talk over matters and go into details of the cruise."

All through the meal the boys could think of nothing but the coming trip to the tropics, and kept up an incessant fire of questions at Mr. Rogers. Paul's mother was in the West, visiting Harry's parents while he visited Paul, and so the two boys and Mr. Rogers were alone. The boys wanted to know all about Captain Perkins, about Barbados, about how long they would be gone, where they would stop, what they would see, and a thousand and one other things about the cruise.

"Come, come, boys; one thing at a time," laughed Paul's father. "Captain Perkins is a retired sea captain. He married the daughter of an English planter in Barbados, and after he gave up the sea he settled down and took over the estate when his father-in-law died. I don't know him personally, but he used to know my father in the old West Indian sugar-trade days when the square-riggers lined South Street from the bridge to the battery.

"He's still fond of the sea, and as he has interests in several of the islands and travels about a great deal he has been trying to buy a good seaworthy yacht for some time. Mr. Johnson met him when he was down at Barbados, and mentioned the *Cormorant* to him. I agreed to deliver the yacht, partly because I wanted to go to the tropics, and

partly because I thought you boys would like a last cruise in her.

“We’ll have plenty of time for the trip, and I expect to stop at nearly every island on the way down. I want you boys to learn just as much about the places as you can before you start, and to keep your eyes and ears open on the cruise, and see how much you can increase your education with a knowledge of our West Indian neighbors. But now let’s go back to the library and get out the maps and atlas and see just where we are going.”

Spreading a large map on the table, Mr. Rogers, with a rule and pencil, marked off the course from New York toward the little dots indicating the West Indies.

“That’s the course, boys,” he said, “and that”—pointing to a little spot east of Porto Rico—“is our first port. It’s the island of St. Thomas, a Danish colony, and from there on down through this long chain of islands you’ll see the flags and anchor in the waters of three other European powers—France, England, and Holland.”

“Perhaps we’ll find pirates’ treasure or a sunken galleon!” exclaimed the romantic Harry.

“Nonsense; don’t be foolish!” said Paul. “Those are just stories.”

“It’s rather unlikely, Harry,” laughed Mr. Rogers. “There were plenty of pirates there in

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days gone by, and no doubt they buried treasure. History tells us numerous plate ships were sunk among the reefs; but those that haven't already been discovered are pretty well hidden, or so overgrown that they're only found by accident. But they're not *all* story-book tales, Paul; several wrecks *have* been recovered, and hidden treasures *have* been found, and more than one West Indian gentleman and several respectable and well-to-do Americans have laid the foundation of their fortunes with gold and jewels from the old pirates' stores and the sunken galleons.

"One can never tell what may happen in this world, and if you boys can get any fun out of thinking you may discover a treasure, it will do no harm and will give you an added interest in the places and their historical associations."

"What languages do the people in the islands speak?" asked Harry.

"Quite a number," replied his uncle. "The natives in the Danish colonies all speak English, and some of them Danish in addition. The French speak a queer French patois. In some of the British colonies very pure English is used exclusively, while in others the true creole patois is used. This is a mixture of French, Carib Indian, and African, and is very hard to learn or understand. Of course, in the

Spanish countries Spanish is spoken. In the Dutch islands the natives speak English and Dutch.

“It’s the same way with the money; you’ll have to learn how to make change in British, Danish, Dutch and French money, and how to figure exchange and discount and such things. So you see you’ve a great deal to read about and learn before we sail, and you can put in every moment of your time profitably from now until next Tuesday.

“To-morrow I want you to overhaul your clothes and get out all your summer things. We’ll have to start out with winter clothes and overcoats, but in a few days we’ll be in warm weather, and white ducks and light flannels will be in order.

“I haven’t been to the islands for a good many years, but I guess they haven’t changed much; and with a couple of good sailors, you two boys and a cook, we’ll get along all right. After we reach St. Thomas I expect to engage native pilots for the harbors, where necessary. Harry will be our first mate, Paul will rate as chief engineer, and I’ll be captain and purser. I’ve written to a friend to get me a steward who is a good cook, and now I’ve lots to do, so I’ll leave you boys with the books.”

That night and the next few days were busy times for the two boys. Every book they could find on the West Indies and the tropics was devoured with interest, and maps were studied by the score. In ad-

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dition, clothing was looked over, the yacht was visited, and supplies and stores put aboard, fishing tackle and shotguns overhauled and placed in order, cameras and films purchased, and numerous other things attended to in preparation for the long southern cruise.

By Monday everything was ready and on board the *Cormorant*; the sailors had been engaged and were quartered on the yacht, and everybody was prepared to sail except the steward and cook, who had not put in an appearance.

"It looks as if we'd have to do our own cooking or else wait over," remarked Mr. Rogers, as they sat in the library after dinner Monday. "I've tried every agency in town, and have wired or phoned to every club or yacht owner I know. It seems as if every sea cook was engaged or had given up his trade."

As he finished speaking, the doorbell rang, and a moment later the servant announced that a man wished to see Mr. Rogers.

"He's a black man," she added, "and rough-looking; but he says he has important business, sir."

"Very well," said Mr. Rogers, rising and leaving the room.

In a few moments he returned, followed by the funniest-looking man the boys had ever seen. He was very tall and thin with inky-black face; but in-

stead of the broad, flat nose, kinky hair, and thick lips of the negro, the newcomer had the thin straight nose, narrow lips, and other features of a white man, while his hair was straight as an Indian's and fell to his shoulders. His eyes were small and keen, and reminded Harry of the eyes of a canary. He was dressed in rather shabby clothes, including a long, rough ulster and a battered derby hat. As he entered the room, he bowed low from his waist, placing one hand on his breast, and at Mr. Rogers' invitation, he seated himself in a chair.

"So you're a cook," said Mr. Rogers. "How did you know I wanted a steward? Did anyone send you to me?"

"No, sar," replied the stranger, in low, soft tones. "Me see tha boat, sar, an' tha mon say tha Sahib desire tha cook, sar."

"Ah! You're an East Indian, I take it? What is your name? Have you any references?"

"Me name Rami, sar. Yes, sar. Me have tha paper, sar"; and, so saying, he drew forth a little bundle of letters from an inner pocket.

Mr. Rogers looked them over quickly, while the boys, almost convulsed with restrained amusement and fascinated by the man's strange appearance, buried themselves on the lounge.

"These seem very flattering, Rami," said Mr.

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Rogers. "I know several of the gentlemen. Will you be on board to-morrow by ten?"

"Yes, sar; me be thar, sar. Thank you, sar." Rising and again bowing, the new cook retired silently out into the darkness.

"Well, we've got the cook, anyway," said Mr. Rogers. "He's a queer-looking fellow, I must admit; but some of those Hindus are very good stewards. You'll see many of them among the islands. Come now, boys, off to bed with you. Everything's settled, and we go aboard at ten to-morrow. Then heave-ho for the lands where the trade-winds blow."

CHAPTER II

SOUTHWARD BOUND

THE morning dawned clear and bright but with a cold, nipping northwest wind, while the slush and mud had frozen into dirty, slippery ice in the streets.

The boys, filled with suppressed excitement, could scarcely eat their breakfast; but presently the taxi was at the door. With their last hand baggage, Mr. Rogers and the two boys stepped in and were whirled rapidly downtown and across the bridge toward the Brooklyn basin, where the *Cormorant* lay.

It was cold and chilly on the docks, and Harry and Paul were glad to turn up the collars of their heavy overcoats as they walked hurriedly over the short space between the road and the yacht.

She was a good-sized boat, about sixty feet on the water line; yawl-rigged and designed for seagoing purposes and comfort rather than speed. While her high freeboard, lively sheer, and stout pole masts spoke of stanchness and a dry boat, yet her clean lines and sharp bow were indications of her ability to make good time.

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The boys at once dove down the companionway to the cabin, which was warm and comfortable.

"Well, I'm glad I'm the engineer just now," remarked Paul, as he pulled off his overcoat and began oiling and looking over the motor in the little engine room. "It's too cold for comfort on deck."

"That's all right, old man," laughed Harry; "but wait till we get in warm weather, and you'll change your mind. Here comes Uncle Charles; I guess it must be time to start."

"Motor all right, Paul?" called his father, as he entered the cabin. "We'll be casting off in ten minutes or so. Better turn her over and let her warm up a little until we're ready."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Paul; and a moment later the steady throbbing of the big motor could be felt throughout the little ship.

"Well, it's time for the mate to be on deck," remarked Harry; and, turning up his coat collar and pulling down his cap, he left the cabin.

As he stepped from the companionway, a short, stout man in an ulster sprang onto the deck and Mr. Rogers shook hands. "All right, pilot," he exclaimed, "we're only waiting for you. I suppose I could have got along without you, but I didn't feel sure of the channels with the winter buoys. You're in charge now, so if you're all ready we'll cast off

and get away from New York weather as quickly as we can."

A moment later, with the pilot at the wheel and Harry and the sailors at the hawsers, the orders were given, the screw commenced to churn the water into foam, lines were cast off, and the *Cormorant* slowly gathered way. Grating gently against the floating bits of ice, she left the basin astern and headed down the river toward the lower bay.

As soon as the lines were coiled and the docks were left astern, Harry and Mr. Rogers dove below again to get warmed up, for out on the harbor the wind cut cruelly and penetrated the thickest clothing.

"I pity that pilot," said Harry, as the cabin was reached. "Think of standing out at that wheel in this weather with bare hands!"

"He doesn't mind it," replied Mr. Rogers. "Seafaring men get so accustomed to cold and exposure that they do not consider this weather anything but pleasant."

The yacht was now well down the harbor, and Fort Wadsworth had been left astern, while abreast was a huge transatlantic liner just coming in, her high bows glistening with ice in the bright January sunshine and her rails crowded with emigrants muffled in shawls and wraps.

"We must look mighty small to the people on

her," remarked Harry. "I suppose they wonder where we're going this sort of weather."

"It's a trim little boat you have here," remarked the pilot, who with open overcoat and ungloved hands was at the wheel. "She'll stand a sight of knocking about. Built a deal like our pilot schooners, and not much smaller. Bound to the Indies, ye say? Well, she'll make it all right, and in good time, at that. Ought to be in the Gulf Stream by Thursday, and after that ye'll most likely have fair weather. You've a fair wind to whoop ye along, and I expect ye'll be spreadin' your cloths after ye pass the lightship."

"Yes," replied Mr. Rogers, "just as soon as we drop you we'll break out sail. I think she'll carry everything in this wind, and the sooner we get beyond this cold air the better we'll like it."

The pilot laughed. "Well, I reckon 'tis coolish for landsmen. But, Lord love ye! this is summer-like to me. Why, las' week in the blizzard I boarded the *Moltke* an' every wave swashed clean over me and froze solid. I looked like a hunk o' ice when I made the deck, an' thick—ye couldn't see the fo'c'sle from the bridge half the time!"

The *Cormorant* was now passing through the Narrows, and presently Mr. Rogers and Harry again ran below for warmth. A few moments after the little boat began to rise and fall, and Mr. Rogers

remarked that they were getting the ocean swell. A little later they returned to the deck, and saw the Scotland lightship ahead, and not far away a little black schooner with every sail set, her lee rail awash and her forefoot throwing a curling white wave as she bore toward them.

She was a beautiful sight as her bow rose and fell to the seas and the sun gleamed on her copper sheathing. The big figure "2" on her mainsail showed her to be a pilot boat.

"Yes, she's my ship," remarked the pilot. "I'll run over close and save the boys a row." Giving the wheel a turn, he headed the *Cormorant* toward the approaching pilot boat. In a few moments the latter rounded to with the graceful sweep of a sea gull, the *Cormorant* slowed down, and presently both boats were resting motionless a cable's length apart.

A moment later the pilot boat's yawl was over the side, and, pulled by lusty oars, rapidly came alongside the yacht. The pilot shook hands with Mr. Rogers and the boys and sprang into his boat. With a last wave of his hat, Mr. Rogers took the wheel; and, signaling full speed ahead to Paul and calling to the sailors and Harry to hoist sails, he headed toward the open ocean.

It was cold work getting sail on the yawl, but the exercise soon warmed the men up, and Paul came up to help his cousin and the sailors. It was not long

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before the jib and mizzen were set, and soon after the big mainsail was spread to the fresh breeze. With every stitch drawing, the motor was stopped, and like a freed bird the *Cormorant* tore southward through the cold, green seas, a cataract of water under her bows and a rushing wake of foam stretching far astern.

Hardly was the canvas set and everything belayed when Rami appeared and announced: "Dinnarr is served, sahib."

As the boys caught sight of him, they fairly gasped in amazement. Could this be the odd, grotesque Hindu they had seen the night before? Gone were the shabby clothes and the old overcoat, and in their place were tight-fitting, white trousers; a long, loose, black coat with a fringed sash, and in place of the battered derby a huge white turban.

Handing the wheel to Tom, the sailor, and giving him the course, Mr. Rogers and the boys entered the cabin, and having rubbed their benumbed hands and faces into life, they seated themselves at the table. And what a meal! Never had any of the party eaten better cooked food; and that Rami was as good a waiter as a cook was soon evident.

"I'm glad we had the luck to get him," said Mr. Rogers. "The Hindus are sober, respectful, and obedient; but one doesn't very often see them in New York, especially in cold weather. They can't

stand our climate, and I suppose Rami will never stir from below decks until we reach warm weather. Come, boys, on deck now, and give the sailor men a chance to eat."

There was nothing to be done but to steer, for the wind was fair over the quarter, the open Atlantic was before them, and what little sea there was came off the land, so the little yacht lifted and soared over the crests and slid smoothly into the hollows with the ease and buoyancy of her feathered namesake.

Throughout the afternoon the sailors, the boys, and Mr. Rogers took turns at steering. On account of the cold air, it was agreed that the men should stand watches of two hours each at the wheel, while Mr. Rogers and the boys should take turns at the lookout and in charge of the deck.

Soon after supper darkness fell, and only the glowing lights of the little *Cormorant* broke the vast blackness that overspread the ocean, but far astern a faint glow in the west showed where the great city lay bathed in its millions of lights beneath the winter sky.

It was dreary, cold work walking the decks throughout the long, dark night; and glad indeed were the boys when at last the glimmer of dawn showed in the east.

A steaming cup of hot coffee, sizzling bacon, and

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hot rolls did much to warm and cheer the little party, and as the wind died down somewhat and the sun rose higher life on deck became more bearable.

The sea had now taken on the dark indigo tint of deep water, and the vast rim of the ocean stretched unbroken on every hand save far to the northward, where a faint smudge of smoke showed some passing steamer, hull-down beyond the horizon.

By the middle of the forenoon the weather had become appreciably warmer, and the boys found it fairly comfortable to remain on deck. Just before noon, Mr. Rogers appeared from the cabin with a sextant, and announced that he was about to take an observation to determine their position. Although both boys had frequently heard of the use of the instrument, they had never actually seen an observation made, and were greatly interested in the operation. Stationing one of the men at the ship's bell, Mr. Rogers stood by the cabin and every few seconds squinted through the telescope attached to the instrument in his hands, turning a screw here and there until at last he called out: "Eight bells!" Instantly the sailor rang the eight strokes on the bell, and Mr. Rogers disappeared in the cabin. A few minutes later he again appeared, and remarked: "Well, we've made good time, so far—about two



Mr. Rogers squinted through his sextant and at last called out: "Eight bells!"

hundred and thirty miles in twenty-six hours. We'll soon be in warm weather now."

By evening even the chill that had lingered in the air all day had disappeared, and the weather felt like a pleasant April day in New York. There was no discomfort in staying on deck that evening, and all through the night the motor throbbed steadily and the *Cormorant* pushed southward through the smooth sea, leaving a glittering trail of phosphorescence astern.

The sun rose red above a glassy, sparkling, indigo sea; and the sailors, barelegged and in canvas suits, commenced swabbing and scrubbing the decks. By noon overcoats were laid aside and the little party lolled about on the yacht's deck, enjoying the warm air and bright sunshine. The observation showed another two hundred miles and more covered, and Mr. Rogers remarked that they were within the Gulf Stream.

The following morning the sun rose from the sea in a riot of color, changing the sea to purple and gold, and with the warmth of summer in its rays. By noon the boys had donned summer clothes, and even old Rami had emerged from between decks, clad in spotless linen.

The noon observation showed 192 miles covered, and Mr. Rogers told the boys that they were now somewhere south and west of the Bermudas and

almost across the Gulf Stream. All day long the weather held fine, with just a light, soft wind cresting the little waves with silver, while the yawl, leaning slightly to the breeze, hummed softly through the water, her bowsprit ever pointing toward the south.

Saturday dawned as cloudless and beautiful as the day before, and after breakfast the boys watched the sailors stretch an awning over the afterdeck, for the wind had fallen to a dead calm and the yacht was proceeding by motor alone.

Glancing over the side, Paul caught sight of a floating patch of dull-yellow weed, and called his father's attention to it.

"That's a sure sign of the Stream," said Mr. Rogers. "It's sargassum or Gulfweed, and you will see more and more of it as we go south. To-morrow or next day we may pass through acres of it, for we are headed directly toward the Sargasso Sea."

"Oh," exclaimed Harry, "that's where the ships all used to lie and float about forever, isn't it?"

Mr. Rogers laughed. "It's where the sailors used to *think* they did; but in reality there's no *true* Sargasso Sea, and any ship can run through it without trouble."

"Oh, look! Look!" exclaimed Harry excitedly, pointing ahead and to one side of the bow. "What's

that? It looked like a bird that jumped out of the water and flew off ahead."

"Why, it must have been a flying fish," replied Mr. Rogers. "Yes; see—there's another!"

As he spoke the fishes broke from the surface of the sea, and, shining like bits of burnished metal, they whirled rapidly away, skipping across the water until they plunged suddenly into the brine in little showers of spray.

"Oh, I do wish we could catch one!" said Paul. "I'd like to see one close to. Can't we get one somehow?"

As he spoke, Rami, who was passing, salaamed and said:

"Yes, Sahib Paul; Rami he cartch tha fish. To-night, sar, mebbe to-day; but to-night in surely, sar."

"Oh, that's fine!" exclaimed Paul. "Go ahead, Rami, and catch some. Are they good to eat?"

"Oh, sahib; mos' excellent sar!" smiled Rami, and continued on his way forward.

A little later the Hindu appeared, carrying an old netting hammock; and with the help of one of the sailors, and watched attentively by the boys and Mr. Rogers, he stretched this under the bowsprit so that it formed a wide, trough-like netting close to the water. He then explained to the boys that as soon as the flying-fish became more common, they would

undoubtedly fly into the net in attempting to cross the yawl's bows. But to make matters more sure, he said, he would place a bright light under the bowsprit at night to attract them. The boys seemed doubtful of this contrivance, and as the fishes became more and more numerous they watched carefully to see if any approached the net. All that they observed, however, seemed to fly either straight ahead or off to right or left, and at last they became tired of watching and sat down on the afterdeck.

Looking astern, Paul noticed a number of small, dark birds following the yacht.

"Them's Mother Carey's chickens," said one of the sailors. "Stormy petrels some calls 'em. They allers follows a craft about in blue water, an' if they's hurted they brings bad luck."

"I've heard of them," said Harry. "What do they look like? They seem to run along on top of the waves, instead of really flying."

Tom thought a moment, turning the quid of tobacco in his cheek, and finally remarked: "Well, if you'd like fer to see 'em an' won't hurt the chicks, we'll cotch one ter show ye. Jest bring a spool o' black thread an' a couple o' corks an' a handful o' crumbs, an' we'll have a chick aboard in no time."

The boys hurried to the cabin, and presently returned with the desired articles.

Tom then directed them to tie the corks to the

ends of pieces of thread about thirty or forty feet in length and to throw them over the stern, after attaching the free ends of the threads to the rail. As soon as this was done, he told the boys to throw over a handful of crumbs and to be ready at the threads.

The passage of the yacht through the water caused the corks to bob merrily along in her wake while the threads lifted in loose arcs above the surface. The instant the crumbs were thrown over, the petrels, with little cries, flocked under the yacht's stern and in a moment three of them had flown against the black threads and were hopelessly entangled in them.

They were quickly drawn on board and the thread gently unwound from wings and feet. They seemed in no way timid, and stared boldly about, pecking at the boys and uttering queer little cries.

They were small, grayish-brown birds with long slender wings, hooked beaks, and large bright eyes, and seemed scarcely able to stand upright on their tiny legs and webbed feet.

"Well, of all funny ways to catch birds!" laughed Paul. "I never should have thought of such a thing. If we tell the other boys at home about this, they'll think we're yarning sure. Well, now we've seen the birds, let's free them and see them fly back."

As he finished speaking, he released the little creature he was holding; but the bird, instead of at once

flying away, fluttered across the deck until it reached the edge, and pushing itself off at once spread its wings and rejoined its comrades in the vessel's wake.

"Well, those *are* the funniest birds I ever saw," said Harry. "First, they run over the water, then we catch them with corks and thread, and finally they have to almost tumble off something before they can fly."

A soft easterly breeze now began to ruffle the surface of the water, and shortly after the *Cormorant* was again sheering through the little waves with all sails drawing and her starboard rail almost buried in the foam that rushed aft from her sharp prow.

After supper everyone sat on deck, the air being warm as summer, while the yacht sailed steadily southward under the brilliant stars.

Suddenly Paul uttered an exclamation of fright and surprise, and something flopped heavily on the deck.

"What on earth was that?" he cried. "Something hit me a crack on the back and then bounced off to the deck. Well, of all things," he added, as he lit a match, "if it isn't a fish!"

Sure enough, lying on the deck by Paul's chair was a smooth, silvery fish about six inches in length.

"That's queer," said Harry. "Let's take it into the cabin and look at it."

“Yes, it’s a flying-fish, as I thought,” said Mr. Rogers. “See, these huge thin side fins are its wings. Well, you’ve beat old Rami at his fishing, this time.”

The boys called to Rami to see their capture, and presently he appeared, carrying a small basket.

“Look here, Rami!” cried Paul exultingly. “See what we caught. We don’t need a hammock to catch *our* fish. Where were all those you were going to show us?”

The Hindu looked at the fish carefully, and spoke respectfully:

“Yes, Sahib Paul, he surely are flying-fish, sar. Me put him with this me cotch to cooky for break-fas’.”

As he spoke, he lifted the cover of his basket and exposed a round dozen flying-fish within it. The joke was on the boys.

CHAPTER III

LAND HO!

SUNDAY morning the boys arose to find the *Cormorant* tearing through the water with the rigging humming to a piping southeasterly wind, which whipped the lazuli sea into sparkling, white-crested waves that slapped in showers of spray against the vessel's side.

With every plunge the yacht buried her bows in cascades of foam, wetting her staysail for a dozen feet above the deck and shaking the brine from her decks as she rose upward on the waves, as if in very joy at her own buoyancy and power.

"My, but this *is* glorious!" cried Paul, as he reached the deck and drew in long breaths of the clean, warm air. "It reminds me of one of Clark Russell's stories."

"Yes," replied his cousin, standing beside him and grasping a stay to steady himself against the jump of the deck. "How can any power boat compare with this? Isn't the old *Cormorant* a bully little ship, though!"

Mr. Rogers now came aft from where he had been

giving some orders to a sailor. "Good morning, boys. How's this for cruising weather? We're just beginning to catch the trade-winds now. We ran into them farther north than I expected, and at this rate we're due to cross the Tropic of Cancer to-night. Look at the sargassum now, Paul."

Sure enough, on every side were great patches of the curious yellow weeds, some but a few feet in extent, while others covered acres of the tossing seas with a smooth, yellow carpet.

"Oh, look!" cried Harry, pointing ahead. "There's a sail."

Everyone turned, and as the yacht rose to the crest of a sea they all caught sight of the sail—a little, gossamer-like patch on the horizon and seemingly as soft and airy as a wisp of cloud.

A moment later, as the yacht plunged down into the trough of the sea, the sail was lost to sight; but each time the *Cormorant* lifted her dripping bows to the waves another glimpse was had of the distant sail; and very soon they were convinced it was headed toward them.

Everyone was excited, for it was the first vessel they had sighted on the thousand miles of ocean they had traversed. Rami's call to breakfast was unheeded, and even the Hindu himself forgot his errand and stood gazing at the rapidly approaching ship.

In a short time the strange sail was in sight constantly, and her lofty canvas gleamed golden and purple as it swung to the heave of the waves. Everyone could see it was a square-rigged vessel of some sort.

"It's a bark!" cried Harry.

"No; it's a ship," insisted Paul.

"I think it's a barkentine, myself," said Mr. Rogers, as he studied it through his glasses. "What do you say, Tom?"

The sailor shaded his eyes with the edge of his palm, gazed steadily at the oncoming craft a moment, and remarked: "If you arsk me, I'd say ye're all right an' all wrong. Yonder's a four-masted bark. Some calls 'em ships and some barkentines. She's a steel ship from the West Coast, most likely. Mebbe from Chili with nitrate, or from Vancouver with lumber, an' prob'ly a Britisher named arfter some bloomin' ol' castle in Scotlan'."

By now the ship was within plain view, and a beautiful picture she presented.

"Ah, there go her colors!" cried Mr. Rogers, as a tiny ball of bunting rose to the ship's masthead. "Run in and get the code book, Paul, and get our flags out, Tom."

A second later the little ball burst open and flamed out into the scarlet banner of England, and was an-



The ship was within plain view, and a beautiful picture she presented

swered by the Stars and Stripes from the *Cormorant's* masthead.

The two vessels were now almost abreast, half a mile apart, and the roar of the ship through the seas and the humming of the wind in her rigging were plainly audible aboard the *Cormorant*.

Presently a string of tiny flags soared aloft on the bark, and Paul, with the code book in hand, read off:

“The *Claigorn Castle*, Sunderland; McGarry, Master, one hundred and eighteen days out from Vancouver with lumber for Harding Brothers, New York. Kindly report us.”

“Well, Tom,” laughed Harry, “you must be a mind reader, or something of that sort.”

Tom was busy with the signal flags under Mr. Rogers' direction; and presently the little string of pennants and burgees ran aloft and the passing ship was able to read:

“Yacht *Cormorant*, Rogers; five days out from New York to St. Thomas. Report all well.”

As the yacht's colors came down another set of signals was run up on the bark that was now showing her broad counter as she passed astern, and Paul read:

“Look out for derelict, sixty-six degrees thirty-two minutes west, twenty-two degrees fifteen minutes north. Good luck.”

A moment later the British ensign dipped in good-bye, and a man stepped to the bark's after-rail and waved his hat in farewell. The yawl's colors dipped in reply, all the boys and men cheering lustily and waving their hats while the heaving seas spread wider and wider between the two boats. Then the boys turned reluctantly and descended to their breakfast.

Everyone agreed that there was nothing better than fried flying-fish cutlets, and Rami grinned delightedly at the praises bestowed on his culinary skill.

When the party again reached the deck, the *Claigorn Castle* was hull-down on the northern horizon; only her shimmering upper sails breaking the sweep of the vast ocean.

"We'll have to keep a sharp lookout for that derelict, boys," said Mr. Rogers. "It's almost directly in our course, and no one can tell where it may be in a few hours. Those water-logged hulks float about for months or even years, and travel here, there, and everywhere at the whim of ocean currents. However, we won't be near it until to-morrow, so we need not worry to-day. I wonder what sort of weather they're having in New York."

"It's hard to imagine it's cold weather anywhere," remarked Harry.

The wind still held steady and strong, and the

boys amused themselves by counting the flying-fish and patches of gulf-weed for several hours. Finally Paul suggested that they try and catch some of the weed to see what it looked like. This proved far more difficult than it sounded; for the waves, thrown from the yacht's bow, forced the weeds quite a distance from the sides, and it was some time before the boys succeeded in dragging aboard a mass of the weed by means of large fish hooks attached to a stout line.

The soggy, yellow weed was placed in a bucket of water, and Mr. Rogers and the boys proceeded to examine it. They found it rather pretty seaweed, with yellow stems and leaves and dull round fruit or berries. Paul was pawing it about in the water, when suddenly a piece of the weed broke from the rest and commenced swimming rapidly about in the pail.

"Goodness, the stuff has come to life!" exclaimed the surprised boy.

His father laughed. "No, Paul, the weed hasn't come to life. That's a mouse-fish, or gulf-weed fish. They're remarkable creatures that live among the weeds and make their nests in them. You are lucky, as they're not very often seen. Notice how his head and body are decorated with little streamers that look quite like the weed, and how closely his colors match the sargassum."

32 THE CRUISE OF THE CORMORANT

“Oh, what funny fins he has!” exclaimed Harry.
“They look like little hands.”

“Yes, the mouse-fish uses them like hands, too. He walks and crawls about on the weed instead of swimming, although he can swim well, as you see. I never knew about them until a friend of mine, who is a naturalist, caught one and showed it to the passengers when I was on the way down to the West Indies years ago.”

The boys were greatly interested in the odd fish, and spent some time watching it. They also found several small crabs and some pretty little shells in the weed, and all these queer creatures they agreed to preserve as souvenirs of their first cruise to the tropics. Anxious to obtain other specimens, they dragged in bushels of the weed; but no more fish were discovered, and after a time they gave it up and tossed the weeds overboard.

Soon afterward Mr. Rogers took his observations, allowing each of the boys to take duplicate sights and work out their position, for he was teaching them navigation by actual experience, and they were making rapid progress. When the observations were finally worked out, they found the *Cormorant* had made a splendid run of 215 miles.

The afternoon was spent lounging about the decks, the boys taking turns with the men at steering; and toward evening Mr. Rogers pointed out the fleecy

little trade-clouds that are infallible indications of the trade-winds and the tropics.

The boys found the night so beautiful, with the myriad stars, soft air, and wonderful phosphorescence in the water, that they had hard work to go below and turn in until they were called for their watches on deck.

The wind held steady all night; and although it died down a little at sunrise, it freshened again after breakfast, and Mr. Rogers assured the boys that their noon observation would show that they had crossed the Tropic of Cancer. With the freshening of the breeze it hauled more to the east, and by ten o'clock was over their quarter from the north-east, and Tom informed them that they were now really in the Trades.

While the boys were talking with the sailor they were looking astern.

“Phew! What a fish that was!” Harry suddenly exclaimed.

Tom squinted around; and a moment later, when a great, gleaming body sprang into the air astern, he remarked:

“Them’s dolphins. Mighty good grub they be, too.”

“Oh! Can’t we catch some?” cried both boys, as three of the splendid creatures sprang upward at once.

“But I thought dolphins were not good to eat,” added Paul. “We’ve seen them playing about the harbors back home lots of times, and everyone said they were too oily and rank to eat.”

“Them’s another kind of dolphins,” said Tom. “Them northern things is porp’ses an’ rotten with oil; but these ’ere fish is diff’rent altogether. If ye’s got any strong tackle aboard, get Rami to give ye a bit o’ red herrin’ an’ we’ll see if we can’t cotch one o’ the beauties.”

Both boys hurried to the galley, presently returning with their stoutest fishing tackle and a couple of red herring.

The hooks were soon baited and thrown over the stern.

“Now make ’em fast to the rail,” admonished Tom. “Don’t hold ’em in yer hands, for—Lord love ye!—if one o’ them dolphins takes the herrin’ ye’ll have all the two o’ ye want to haul him in, an’ mebbe a tackle-block besides.”

The lines rapidly paid out, and the herrings could be seen skipping and skittering from wave to wave far astern.

Suddenly there was a gleam of gold and silver, and a dolphin leaped a dozen feet from the sea and plunged close to one of the baits. The next instant the dragging line taughtened with a twang, sending

a shower of spray from its strands, and the water was lashed into foam where the fish had struck.

"You've got him!" yelled Tom excitedly. "Easy, now; haul in the slack as he gives it, but take yer time. Ye'll have to tire him out afore ye get him in. That's the idee; little at a time, an' mind yer hands. Here, Jack," he called to the other sailor, "come along aft an' help haul in this fish. I'll have the bloomin' hooker all aback if I don' mind me eye."

With Jack's help the great fish was soon hauled close in, and a few minutes later it ceased its violent struggles and was drawn onto the deck.

It was certainly a magnificent creature. The boys exclaimed in admiration at its radiant tints of purple, gold, pink, blue, and silver as the fifty-pound fish lay upon the deck.

"Well," said Mr. Rogers, as he came from the cabin, "you boys are certainly having good luck fishing. I heard the racket in my berth. I couldn't imagine what was up. We shall not want for fresh fish if you keep on like this. Flying-fish one day, dolphin the next."

"I guess we don't need any more, do we?" remarked Paul. "We might as well pull in the tackle."

As he spoke, he stepped to the rail and commenced hauling in the other line.

"Hello!" he cried out, as it came taut. "We

must have another fish; something's certainly on this line too."

Harry, Jack, and Mr. Rogers together commenced pulling in the line. There was no leaping, struggling fish visible, and it was not until the hook was within a few feet of the boat's stern that they caught a glimpse of their capture—a beautiful silvery-green fish about four feet long, plentifully spotted with gold.

"Why, that's not like the dolphin!" exclaimed Harry.

"That's a bonita," said Jack. "An' a mighty fine fish, at that. They're mos' gen'rally gamey enough, but this chap must 'a' tired himself out whilst we warn't a-lookin' on."

"Come, boys; make ready for 'shooting the sun'," cried Mr. Rogers. "Let's see if we're over the Tropic yet."

Two hundred and thirty-six miles was the result shown by their calculations. Pricking off their course on the map, the boys gave three cheers, for the last dot showed the Tropic of Cancer behind them.

"Who says the old *Cormorant* isn't a bully boat?" cried Paul.

"Twelve hundred and eighty miles in six days!" exclaimed Harry. "Why, that's almost as good as steam!"

“We’ll be in sight of land on Wednesday, at this rate,” said Mr. Rogers. “Many of the steamers take five days to the trip. We certainly *have* made a record run, but we’ve had fair winds all the way and all we could carry comfortably. We’ve averaged about eight knots. That’s good time with the stream against us. But we must keep on the lookout for that derelict now; we’re getting into its neighborhood.”

The boys found bonita and dolphin splendid eating, and agreed that they had never known what really good fish tasted like until they’d eaten the freshly caught fish served up with mysterious gravies by Rami.

After dinner everyone kept a sharp lookout for the wreck, one of the sailors being sent aloft to the mainmast-head. Here, swinging and swaying in his “bo’sun’s chair,” he swept the horizon with his glasses; and about three o’clock called down that he saw some dark object between the waves ahead and on the port bow. A few moments later he cried: “‘Thar she blows!” and the boys and Mr. Rogers ran to the rail in time to see a little prismatic fountain of spray rise from the water, followed by a great shining black mass as a whale rolled leisurely over and spouted.

The cetacean was some distance away, and the boys were greatly elated at having seen him, and

they gazed steadily seaward for some time, catching occasional glimpses of his flukes or back, or seeing the little column of vapor above the waves as he blew or spouted.

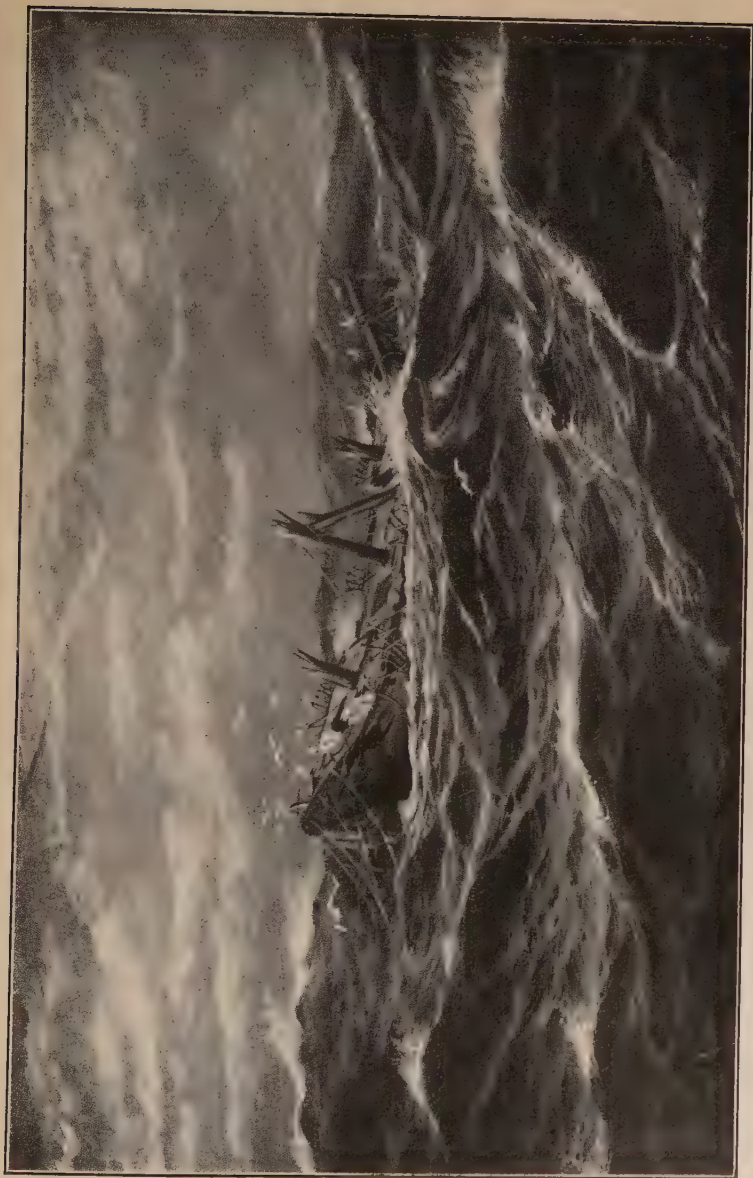
They were all watching the whale when Jack, at the masthead, shouted: "Derelict two points off the starboard bow, sir."

At once the whale was forgotten, and eager eyes were turned to the other side, but it was some time before the wreck was visible from the deck. Tom was the first to catch sight of it and point it out to the others. The *Cormorant* would clear it by at least a mile, if her course was held; so in order to obtain a better view Mr. Rogers told Tom to shift the yacht's course slightly.

As they approached, the boys watched the strange ocean-waif with deep interest. It was the hull of a large wooden vessel, and the stumps of three masts could be seen projecting above the deck, over which the waves swashed as the water-logged wreck rolled sluggishly to the sea.

Numbers of sea fowl were perched upon the battered bulwarks and after-davits, and from the latter the frayed and weathered ropes still hung, dangling to the water.

It was a lonesome, sad sight to see this dead body of a once proud ship floating, forsaken and aban-



It was a lonesome, sad sight to see this dead body of a once proud ship

doned, in mid-ocean, and hardly a word was spoken as the *Cormorant* drove by the derelict.

“What do you suppose happened to her?” asked Harry of Mr. Rogers, at last. “And why doesn’t she sink instead of drifting around like that?”

“I’ll answer your last question first,” replied his uncle. “Probably she was loaded with lumber, and cannot sink until she actually goes to pieces, and that may take months or years. A hulk like that, floating deep in the water, may withstand even the tropical hurricanes without breaking up. Our revenue cutters are constantly engaged in burning up and blowing up derelicts, for they are serious menaces to ships. Just imagine what might have happened if the *Cormorant* or even the big bark we passed had bumped into the wreck under full speed. I will mark the position of the wreck on our chart and report it to Washington when we reach port; and the bark will undoubtedly do the same. Probably within a week a government boat will find her and blow her up with dynamite.

“As to what caused the wreck, it is mere guesswork. She was probably dismasted and became waterlogged. Then the crew sighted some passing ship and abandoned the wreck, or fire may have broken out and the crew may have taken to the boats after scuttling the ship to quench the fire. In fact, a hundred different things may have happened; for

the sea is filled with tragedies. Every year many a good ship disappears and is never heard from. No doubt if the name of the derelict could be learned it might clear up some unknown mystery of the sea."

"Well, I'm glad the bark's captain told us about it, and that we didn't hit it in the night," said Harry. "It makes me shiver even to think of crashing into that doleful black wreck."

Tuesday was another beautiful day, and far and near the water was yellowed by the vast areas of gulf-weed, while myriads of flying-fish broke from the waves on every hand.

"Yes, we're in the Sargasso Sea," replied Mr. Rogers to the boys' questions. "But you don't see the 'graveyard of the ocean' about, do you?" he added, laughing. "Of course, we're only on one edge of it," he continued, "but if we should sail square through the center of the spot you would never notice any difference in the appearance of the sea—just patches of weed. But at times, owing to winds and currents, the sargassum *does* accumulate in solid masses many miles across. I remember on my last trip up from Barbados the ship plowed through sargassum for two days; and it was an extraordinary sight, I can assure you. Not a speck of water was visible, for even behind the steamer the weeds closed together, and the sensation was like steaming over a vast, yellow meadow. The weeds

seemed almost thick and firm enough for one to walk on."

Several handsome white birds with long, slender tail feathers were now noticed about the boat, and Tom informed the boys that they were "bo'sun or Tropic birds," adding that they seldom were seen very far from land, and that they must have flown over from the islands ahead, or possibly from the eastern Bahamas.

Though the noon observation showed a shorter run than the day before, Mr. Rogers, rising from his chart-table, announced: "Well, boys, to-morrow at this time we ought to be at St. Thomas. I wonder who will be the first to sight land?"

"What will be the first land we see?" asked Paul.

"Porto Rico probably," replied his father. "It's so much larger, and the mountains are so much higher than in St. Thomas, that it's generally seen first, although we shall be almost equidistant from both islands as we approach."

The light breeze held all day, and the boys, filled with excitement to think that on the morrow they would see land, were restless and uneasy, and all through the afternoon kept gazing ahead, as if expecting to see Porto Rico bob up at any moment.

Harry's watch was from four to six in the morning, with Tom at the wheel; for the boys took lookout watches of but two hours each, while the sailors

and Mr. Rogers stood the regular "four on and four off."

As he came on deck at his uncle's call, Harry found a fresh wind blowing and the eastern sky just lightening with the approaching dawn.

Pacing back and forth across the forward deck and constantly peering ahead into the grayness, he tried to think how Columbus must have felt as he anxiously waited for the coming day to reveal a new world to his eyes.

All about the horizon the little trade-clouds hung, the rising sun touching them with purple and rose as they drifted lazily along. A dozen times Harry thought he had discovered the distant islands, only to be disappointed as the seeming mountains assumed new and fantastic forms, until at last but one faint bluish cloud drew his attention to where it hung motionless above the purpling rim of the sea.

So vaporous and phantasmal did it seem that he could not believe it to be really land, and, walking aft, he drew the sailor's attention to the little shadow.

The man gave it a single glance, and a moment later the sleepers tumbled from their berths in the cabin as his shout of "Land ho!" rang through the little ship.

CHAPTER IV

UNDER THE DANISH FLAG

PAUL and his father rushed on deck at Tom's shout, old Rami stuck his turbaned head from the galley, and all looked toward the distant cloud-like mountains.

"Pshaw!" said Paul, when he at last saw it. "That doesn't look much like land. I expected to see some real mountains."

"Wait a few hours, Paul," said his father, "and you'll find those mountains real enough. That's Porto Rico yonder, and by the time breakfast is over we'll see St. Thomas."

As they talked, the cloud-like land was steadily growing plainer and rising higher and higher above the horizon until, when called to breakfast by Rami, the mountains had taken definite form and showed opalescent and purple with delicate cloud-wreaths hanging above them, while to the left and like wisps of blue vapor the peaks of St. Thomas could be seen.

Presently a number of large white and black birds winged swiftly toward the yacht, and soon a flock of the "boobies," as Tom called them, were diving and soaring about in the *Cormorant's* wake. By

ten o'clock the *Cormorant* was close to the island, and the vegetation, rocky cliffs and wave-swept beaches were plainly visible less than five miles distant.

The boys gazed upon the scene with interest and wonder, for here at last were the West Indies, and Harry voiced the feelings of both when he exclaimed:

"Well, I never would have thought of seeing mountains like these down here! I always thought the West Indies were little flat islands. Why, on the maps St. Thomas is just a little dot, and here are all these mountains stretching for miles. I don't see what good it is to study geography if you don't get a better idea of places than one gets of these islands."

"That's the trouble with 'book learnin'," said his uncle. "I remember I was just as much surprised as you when I first saw the islands. But don't call *these* mountains, my boy. Wait till you see the other islands. St. Thomas is merely hilly, and is one of the smallest islands. But look over on the other side and you'll see something interesting also."

Both boys turned as he spoke; on the starboard bow, and several miles distant, they spied a white, towering object rising from the blue water.

"It's a ship!" exclaimed Paul.

His father laughed. "That's one on you, Paul.

Many a man has been fooled by that old rock. That's 'Sail Rock'; it is famous for its resemblance to a ship under sail."

"Run down and bring up the chart, Harry," he added. "We're almost at the harbor entrance, and although I expect to take on a pilot, I want to be sure about the reefs and rocks."

Harry brought out the chart; and, spreading it on the cabin-roof, they went over it carefully and Mr. Rogers picked out his course. They were still busy at this when Tom remarked that a sailboat was approaching. A few moments later the little craft hailed the yawl, and asked if a pilot was wanted. He was answered in the affirmative, the yacht was brought into the wind and the little boat came alongside.

She was a large-sized whale boat with two sails and manned by several coal-black negroes. As she ran up to the *Cormorant*, the mast was unstepped, one of the barefooted darkies scrambled onto the yacht's deck and the little boat dropped astern, where she was held by a turn of her painter around the *Cormorant's* after-rail.

"Are you the pilot?" asked Mr. Rogers, as the newcomer reached the deck.

"Yessir, Ah ahm that, Captain," replied the black fellow, with a grin.

"All right, then," said Mr. Rogers, "take the wheel. Do you prefer to go in under sail or power?"

"Ah'd be pleased to have the sails, sir. Ah don't know narithin' 'bout tha power, sir." So saying, he took the wheel from Tom, and in a second or two had the *Cormorant* under way and skimming rapidly toward the nearest point of the island.

Harry and Paul looked at the man with interest. He was the first native West Indian they had seen, and was very different from the lazy, dirty, ragged negroes they had pictured. To be sure, he was black; but his hair was far from being kinky, his nose and features were well shaped, and his face was intelligent. He was dressed neatly in a blue serge sailor suit and broad grass hat, and his English was far superior to that of the ordinary American darky.

The pilot, noticing their intent gaze, grinned and remarked: "Ah 'spect, sirs, yo're strangers to tha islan's. Wha come yo' from, beggin' yo' pardons, sirs?"

"We're from New York," replied Paul. "We left there a week ago yesterday. Yes, it's the first time we've ever been here; but my father's been here before."

The pilot gave a rapid glance over the little yacht. "Ah'd be well pleased to sail a boat like this, sirs. Tha's good time for to come from New York. Yo' must 'a' met with fair weather, sirs."

A few minutes later the yacht rounded a corner of the island, and before them lay the beautiful harbor of Charlotte Amelie. Girt with the sloping mountains, the little bay lay smooth and calm, its azure water turning to emerald and turquoise near the shores, the little toy-like town climbing upward from the waterfront among the greenery of the hills behind. The shining white houses with their red roofs, half hidden in the foliage, the feathery palms along the beach, the brilliant sunlight and the wonderfully colored water all formed a beautiful and novel picture to the boys.

The water of the harbor was dotted with vessels of all rigs and sizes, flying the colors of a dozen nations. Big, clumsy British tramp steamers, a trim American clipper ship, a gray Norwegian freighter, grimy colliers, and a beautiful snow-white Danish warship rode upon the glassy surface. As the *Cormorant* passed the huge, red drydock and the busy coaling station and dropped anchor a few hundred yards from the landing stage, a puff of white smoke rolled from the Danish cruiser and the hills reverberated to the roar of her guns.

“They certainly seem glad to see us,” laughed Mr. Rogers. “One would actually think they were saluting us; but it’s really for the governor. See, there comes his boat now.” He pointed toward a little

launch flying the white-crossed, scarlet flag of Denmark.

The *Cormorant's* anchor was hardly over before the yawl was surrounded by a bevy of small boats manned with boys and men of every color; but none approached closely until the revenue boat, with its Danish flag and white-clad officer, came alongside, and the blond, pink-faced official sprang over the rail.

He was very courteous, and, after looking rapidly over the yacht's papers, shook hands with Mr. Rogers and the boys, welcomed them to the colony, and, touching his cap again, stepped into his boat and headed for a Royal Mail packet just entering the outer harbor.

As soon as he left the yacht's side, the bumboats crowded about, their occupants chattering, shouting, calling and chaffing, soliciting passengers for the shore, offering curios for sale, and all very good-natured and happy. The boats were all brightly painted, and Harry and Paul were amused at the odd names on their sterns: "George Washington," "Uncle Tom," "Happy Lass," "Black Bess," "Water Works," and others equally funny. To cap the climax, an old gray-bearded darky pulled slowly about in a blue and orange boat named "Father Time."

"Oh, look at Rami!" exclaimed Paul. "Let's see



Before them lay the beautiful harbor of Charlotte Amalie



They wandered leisurely along the main street

what he's buying." Both boys hurried forward to where Rami was bargaining with a mulatto boatman with a boatload of fruits and vegetables.

The boys were greatly surprised to hear the cook carrying on the conversation in his native Hindu.

"Well, who'd have thought one of these boatmen could speak that!" said Harry.

The boatman heard his remark, and laughed. "Oh, yas, sir," he said. "Plenty St. Thomas man talk it, sir."

"Do you speak anything else?" asked Harry.

"Mos' surely, sir. Ah talk tha Dansk, tha Dutch, tha Franch, tha German, tha Portuguese, tha Spanish, tha Japan, an' tha China."

"Oh, Paul, hold me up; I'm going to faint after that!" laughed Harry.

"Yes," said Mr. Rogers, who had approached and overheard the conversation, "the St. Thomas boatmen are famous for the number of tongues they can speak. You see, boats from all nations come here, and in order to bargain with their crews the boatmen are obliged to pick up a smattering of nearly every language spoken by the sailors of the seven seas. I can tell you something funnier than that. Our friend here will accept any money ever coined; and what's more he can figure its equivalent in dollars and cents instantly. Just ask him to show you what money he has with him. I'll wager the contents of

his pockets will look like a money-changer's counter."

The boatman, overhearing the conversation, grinned and drew forth a handful of coins. Sure enough, American quarters, British shillings and pennies, Danish, French, German, Mexican, and Spanish coins were mixed together, and among them were half a dozen of the queer brass pieces with a square hole in their centers that were typical of the Chinese Empire.

The boys turned toward the pile of fruit Rami had selected.

"Oh, what funny things!" cried Paul. "What *are* all these odd fruits, father?"

"Those red and yellow and green kidney-shaped fruits are mangoes," replied his father. "This rough, decayed-looking thing is a custard apple. These small russet ones are sapodillas; and the dull, straw-colored fruits are guavas. But come along, boys; you'll have plenty of time to sample these later. Let's go ashore now."

Several uniformed Danish officials stood on the little quay, surrounded by crowds of darkies of every color, size, and age; but all were respectful and orderly, and the officers touched their huge, white helmets as the party from the yacht stepped ashore.

"I never thought a crowd of colored people could

be so clean," said Paul. "Even the raggedest boys look as if their clothes had just been washed, and they all seem so cheerful and good-natured."

"You'll find that throughout most of the islands," said his father. "West Indian colored folk may be dressed in rags and tatters, and may even be beggars; but their daily bath is invariable, and their rags are constantly being washed. They're a happy-go-lucky lot, but always respectful and orderly except in one or two islands where they come in contact with the rough element among sailors."

The party had now reached the main street, and wandered leisurely along between the buildings, looking in the stores and shops, attracted by the queer fruits and vegetables for sale at street stands, and gazing with wonder at some lofty royal palms in the garden about the little stone church.

"Of all queer things!" cried Harry, stopping before a little store. "Who on earth ever needs skates here?" He pointed to a post beside the door where hung several pairs of old-fashioned ice skates. The proprietor, seeing the party stop, stepped to the door.

"We were just looking at the skates," said Mr. Rogers. "We wondered why you should have them for sale here."

"Ah!" replied the storekeeper, "they are not for sale, sir. Merely a symbol of Christmas. I have

had them many years and have little conception of the purpose for which they are utilized, sir. I am aware, however, that they are invariably associated with illustrations of Christmas, and consequently upon the approach of this festival I place the instruments in evidence as an obvious indication of the fact that our annual importation of Christmas commodities has arrived from Europe and America, sir."

The two boys could hardly help laughing at this quaint conceit and the fellow's precise English, and even Mr. Rogers smiled as he thanked the man for his information.

"That's the funniest thing I ever heard," laughed Paul as they continued up the street, "and what long words the fellow used. He sounded as if he was talking from a dictionary."

"His reasons for the skates are quite in keeping with many things you'll see and hear in the islands," said Mr. Rogers, "and the people all love long words; wait until you hear the Antiguans talk if you want to hear really amusing English."

For several hours the boys and Mr. Rogers wandered about the town, finding on every hand new items of interest and wonder. They visited the market, went through the quaint old fortress, lounged in the shade of the palms in the little park, and in the cool of the afternoon trudged up the hill behind the

town to Ma Falie. From here was a magnificent view of the town and harbor with the spoon-shaped coaling station in its center, the numerous dainty islets in the bay, and the green encircling hills. Upon the shimmering blue water the ships and steamers looked like little toys, and near the dock the boys could see their own *Cormorant* with the American flag fluttering bravely at her stern.

Pointing to the southward, Mr. Rogers drew the boys' attention to a little mass of clouds above the azure sea.

"That is Santa Cruz, or St. Croix, boys," he said. "We'll be there to-morrow, and you'll find it very different from St. Thomas, although it's another Danish colony."

Descending the hill toward the town, the boys were attracted to a black boy seated under a cocoanut tree and chopping at some great green-husked nuts with a machete.

"Those are jelly cocoanuts," Mr. Rogers explained. "Here is a good chance for you to have your first taste of one of the most delightful and refreshing of all tropical products."

Calling to the boy, Mr. Rogers asked if he would sell them a few of the nuts and inquired the price.

"Two fo' a cent, sir," the black boy said, and commenced rapidly chopping away the thick fibrous husks from one end of a green nut, leaving the shell

exposed. Holding it upright in one hand, with a single blow of the machete he sliced off a tiny piece from the shell and handed the nut to Mr. Rogers.

"Here, Harry, take a sip of this, and see how you like it."

Harry, placing his lips over the hole in the nut, took a long drink.

"My, but that's bully!" he said. "I never tasted anything so cool and refreshing."

Paul, having now received and sampled his nut, agreed fully with Harry. Mr. Rogers also refreshed himself with a nut.

"Isn't there any meat in these that's good to eat?" asked Harry.

"Surely," replied his uncle. "The meat or jelly is splendid. Let our young merchant here crack open the nut so you may eat some of the jelly."

Harry handed the nut to the negro boy, who quickly cut it into several pieces, and Harry smacked his lips over the soft, creamy, blanchmange-like meat which he scraped from the inside of the shell.

"Well, that isn't much like the dry, hard cocoanuts we get at home," he remarked. "I never supposed cocoanuts were really fit to eat before. We ought to take some of these aboard the yacht. I don't believe Rami bought any."

"That's a good idea, Harry," said Mr. Rogers.

Turning to the darky, he asked: "Can you get a dozen or so of the nuts and bring them to the landing?"

"Ah surely can, Sir," replied the boy. Slipping the machete through his belt, he went to the nearest tree and grasping it with his outstretched hands commenced *walking up the trunk*.

Paul and Harry looked at him in amazement.

"Why, that boy goes up the tree just like a monkey," exclaimed Paul. "He must be some sort of a freak."

"Not a bit of it," laughed his father. "All the West Indian natives climb that way. I've seen them go up the masts or rigging of vessels in the same manner and on one occasion I saw a man come down head-first on a wager. Their toes are almost prehensile and their arms are so long it seems very easy for them to walk up and down the palm trees."

The boy soon reached the long, drooping fronds of the tree, and presently a shower of big green nuts was falling to the earth. When a dozen or two had been thrown down the boy descended as he had climbed; and twisting together the stems of a dozen of the best nuts, he gathered them up, and the little party continued on their way to the launch.

The boys thoroughly enjoyed their supper that night, for it was served on the after-deck, under the awning. While they ate the fresh and strange vege-

tables from the island, and tasted the new and odd fruits, they listened to the band playing in the little park, and watched the ever-changing panorama of boats that crossed and recrossed the harbor between the ships and shore.

"Come, boys," said Mr. Rogers at last. "It's time to turn in. We must get away by daylight tomorrow if we wish any time in St. Croix."

The sun had not yet risen when the boys were aroused, and in a short time the anchor was up, the motor was throbbing steadily and the little yacht headed for the harbor's mouth, while Charlotte Amelie and its lovely bay rapidly faded into the gray dawn astern.

An hour or so later the blue shadow of land took form beneath the clouds ahead, and as mile after mile was covered the blues turned to green and soon the rounded, well-tilled hills of St. Croix stood plain above the sea.

By eleven o'clock they had covered the fifty-odd miles between St. Thomas and St. Croix, and were sailing swiftly along the shore, while the two boys stood by the rail and gazed fascinated as the beauties of the little island were revealed. Headlands and cliffs alternated with snow-white beaches and palm-fringed coves, and above these rose the round green hills. Here and there white stone houses peeped from groves of trees and palms, and now and again



Headlands alternated with snow-white beaches and palm-fringed
coves



Glaring white coral streets, and houses with cool, shaded balconies

a huge stone windmill could be seen standing sharply outlined on some hilltop.

“Those broad, square fields of yellowish-green are sugar cane,” Mr. Rogers explained. “It is the principal crop grown on this island, and Santa Cruz rum and molasses are world famous. Yonder’s a cane mill. See, there with the tall chimney; in former days nearly all the grinding was done by the windmills, but most all the modern mills run by steam. St. Croix is a limestone or so-called coral island,” he added in reply to a question from Harry. “There are no real mountains, and although the island doubtless rests upon a volcanic foundation, it shows little resemblance to the mountainous and volcanic islands we’ll see later on.”

“I never saw a place that was any prettier,” said Harry. “The greens are perfectly wonderful. I never supposed there could be so many different shades of one color, and the whole place looks like some big, well-kept estate or country place.”

The *Cormorant* had now rounded a wooded point and was approaching the little town of Fredericksted. Sweeping in a great crescent was a snowy coral beach, fringed with the wonderful turquoise sea; just above the water’s edge were the white, pink and yellow houses and buildings, shaded with feathery palm trees against the soft green background of the hills.

Within a hundred yards of the dock the *Cormorant* rounded to; the anchor was dropped and the little yacht swung to her cable before the pretty town. As Harry looked over the side he cried out, "Oh, Uncle Charles! I can see the bottom. Isn't the water too shallow?"

Mr. Rogers laughed. "I don't wonder you ask, Harry. The bottom does *look* near, but just drop a sounding line over and you'll find forty feet of water beneath us. No doubt if you look you can even see the anchor on the sand. All the water in the West Indies is wonderfully clear, but where the bottom is white sand, as in St. Croix, it is more easily seen."

For several moments the boys stood watching the fish and marine animals far down in the crystal-like water until the revenue cutter came alongside. The official was a big, yellow-bearded Dane, but as courteous as his St. Thomas fellow.

Rami soon served dinner under the awning, the boys eating hurriedly in their anxiety to go ashore. As they rose from the table they found a number of boats around the yacht, among them several filled with almost naked boys, who stood up and begged the people on the yacht to toss coins overboard so they could dive for them.

Harry laughingly threw over half a dozen small coins, and instantly every black and brown body

flashed with a splash into the water. Harry and Paul could see the divers swimming rapidly down, and could even catch the flash of the silver as the coins sank downward. Presently the foremost boy caught a coin, and checking himself instantly bobbed to the surface like a cork, shaking the water from eyes and ears and holding the coin aloft for all to see. One after another the others bobbed up, all clamoring for more coins.

“Throw some coins on the other side of the yacht,” suggested Mr. Rogers, who stood near. “You’ll find the rascals will dive beneath our hull and catch the money before it strikes bottom.”

The boys acted on the suggestion, and the lithe, dark bodies shot beneath the yawl and bobbed up, with the coins safely clutched, on the further side.

The launch was now brought alongside, and the boys and Mr. Rogers embarked. As they left the yacht the two boys noticed that the entire bottom of the *Cormorant* was visible; even her brass propeller shone like dull, polished gold at her stern. It was certainly a queer effect thus to look at submerged objects as if through clear air.

Reaching the street, the party found the town neat and clean, with glaring white coral streets, numerous wooden and many stuccoed stone buildings, and houses with cool, shaded balconies and arched

doorways. Altogether, the place was far more tropical and foreign than St. Thomas.

It was hot on shore, and Mr. Rogers asked a darky to get a carriage while they sat in the cool and shady colonnade of a well-stocked store.

Presently the messenger reappeared with a little two-wheeled carriage, drawn by a small gray pony. Mr. Rogers and the boys seated themselves in the carriage, directing the darky to drive them to the various points of interest about the town, and then to the nearest sugar mill.

Their driver pointed out the various buildings, the market, postoffice, consulates, fort, etc., and then turned his team down a smooth white road toward the open country.

For some distance the road led between hedges of flowering shrubs, and beneath spreading mimosa trees close to the shore.

Presently the shrubs gave way to low stone walls, beyond which stretched broad fields of waving, green cane, while every man, boy or woman they passed was munching at big hunks of the succulent cane. For several miles they jogged along the splendid road, passing numerous tiny donkeys loaded down and almost hidden by great bundles of cane or "guinea grass," until at last they reached a cross-road and saw the big white buildings and tall chimneys of a cane mill.



They could see the divers swimming rapidly down
Courtesy The Williamson Brothers Submarine Expedition.
Universal Motion Pictures.

They were received hospitably by the overseer, who showed them over the mill and explained all the machinery and the process of the work. Here they saw the carts hauling the fresh-cut cane to the mill, the huge steel rollers that crushed the cane and pressed out the juice, the boiling vats and all the other appliances for manufacturing molasses; but the overseer said that at this mill they made only molasses and coarse brown sugar; adding that a few of the mills refined the sugar, but that on the English islands they would have a better chance to witness the refining process.

The boys were greatly interested in the mills, especially the great kettles or vats in which the thin, watery juice was boiled down to the thick brown syrup.

Thanking the overseer for his kindness, they again entered the carriage and returned to the town. The afternoon was now well advanced and the air was no longer hot, so the boys wandered along the beautiful coral sand beach, picking up strange, bright colored sea shells and bits of coral. In one spot they came upon huge piles of lovely pink conch shells, and were told by the black skinned man who was piling them up that they were burned for lime.

At last, with pockets filled with shells and coral, and each carrying a splendid pink conch, the boys

walked back to the dock and were soon aboard the *Cormorant* again.

After supper Mr. Rogers and the boys took a trip in the launch around the shores, and finding a secluded sandy beach, they enjoyed a swim in the warm, invigorating water.

It was dark when they returned to the yacht, and as they sat upon the deck in the soft tropical evening, it was hard to believe that only ten days before they were enduring the biting cold of a New York winter.

CHAPTER V

IN THE VOLCANO

BEFORE daybreak the *Cormorant* was again under way, and bidding farewell to sleeping Fredericksted and its lovely harbor, the yacht rounded Sandy Point and headed across the Caribbean for St. Christopher.

The wind held fair, the sea was smooth, and as the boys came on deck after dinner St. Kitts showed as a faint purple smudge in the East and low-lying Santa Cruz had dropped below the western edge of the sea.

Presently Harry, who was looking over the side, shouted out: "Starboard your helm! Quick! We're running aground."

Tom swung the tiller down, and as the yawl rounded-to and darted into the wind, with her sails fluttering, Mr. Rogers and Paul ran to where Harry stood.

"What's the matter?" they asked. "What did you see?"

"Oh, Uncle Charles, we almost ran aground. I was looking over the side, and all at once I saw

rocks and sand right ahead of us through the water."

Mr. Rogers' troubled look gave place to smiles, and he clapped Harry on the back. "I'm glad you kept such a good lookout, boy," he exclaimed, "but you needn't be afraid. We're just passing over the edge of Saba Bank, and you saw bottom; but there's thirty feet or more of water beneath us. See here; look over the side and you can still see the bottom. I forgot that you boys were not yet familiar with the clear Caribbean water; but I don't blame you for being frightened. The first time I saw it from a steamer I was startled myself."

Presently Paul caught sight of a second hazy shadow a little to the north of distant St. Kitts. Pointing to it, he asked his father what it was.

"That's Saba," answered Mr. Rogers after studying it a moment. "In many ways it is the most remarkable and interesting island of the whole Antilles. If the wind holds as light as this, and the sea doesn't rise, I hope to land and spend a few hours, for we may never have another chance. It's a Dutch island, as is St. Eustatius, which you can dimly see beyond it by looking through the glasses. But I'm not going to tell you much about it, for I want you to be surprised. I may add, however, that there is but one landing place on the island, and that only a small boat can land there."

In a short time Saba had developed into a lumpy, towering mass of mountains rising precipitously from the sea and sloping gradually toward the summit in the form of a huge flat topped cone.

Still more conical was the massive bulk of St. Eustatius beyond, and presently Harry exclaimed, "Why, Uncle Charles! Those islands look just like the pictures of volcanoes in our geographies."

"That's just what they are," replied Mr. Rogers. "Both Eustatius or 'Statia,' as the people down here call it, and Saba are merely isolated volcanic cones rising from the sea."

"I don't see any houses," Paul complained as they approached Saba. "You said people lived there, but I don't see where they can be."

"Never mind, Paul," said his father, "the people are there, all right, but I told you I wanted to surprise you boys. We are indeed fortunate in having such an ideal day for landing. The wind has dropped, and the sea's calm, and we'll soon be able to run ashore in the launch and visit the oddest island in the West Indies."

The *Cormorant* ran in close to the shores, and the boys were fairly awed by the immense height of the mountain above their heads, which, in many spots, rose for a sheer 2,000 feet directly from the sea. Rounding the southern end of the island, the *Cormorant* came to anchor, and the boys saw before

them a low, shelving rock and leading from it a winding, stone stairway, half hidden in a ravine of the cliffs. Near the crude stairway was a single, small, wooden hut from which the Dutch flag was flying. As the yacht anchored a man rose from before the hut, pushed a row-boat from the rocky shore and rowed slowly to the yawl. He was a tow-headed, blue-eyed, pink-cheeked man, spoke good English, and proved to be the revenue officer. He glanced over the papers, said everything was correct and welcomed the party to his odd island.

"This is the landing place, boys," said Mr. Rogers, "and the stairway known as the 'ladder.' We'll have the launch over in a jiffy, and 'go aboard' Saba, as the natives express it."

A few minutes later the launch carried the party swiftly to the landing, and the boys followed Mr. Rogers as he began climbing the steep stone stairway toward the mountain top.

"If you count these steps," Mr. Rogers remarked, as they stopped to get their breath after climbing a few moments, "you'll find there are eight hundred of them, and yet everything the Sabans bring into their island home is carried up this so-called 'ladder,' or up an even worse trail at the other end of the island, on the people's heads."

At last they reached the summit of the cliffs and looked inland. Before them was a broad green plain

surrounded by towering mountain peaks and precipices covered with rich tropical vegetation. Upon the little bowl-like plain was a village of neat white red-roofed houses embowered in spreading trees and graceful palms.

“Isn’t that a funny sight!” exclaimed Harry. “The idea of finding a village on the top of this place, where no one would ever guess anybody lived.”

“I thought you boys would be surprised,” laughed his uncle. “But you haven’t even commenced to find out the funny things about this island. The town you see yonder is called ‘The Bottom,’ and is well named, as the plain on which it stands is nothing more nor less than the bottom of a volcanic crater, and a live one at that, for in many places steam and sulphur still issue from cracks among the rocks. But let’s go down into the volcano.”

The visitors, descending the sloping pathway, soon found themselves in this queerest of queer towns. They met many people, brown, white, yellow and black, but all were respectful and evidently glad to see strangers in their out-of-the-way town. Much to the boys’ surprise, the people spoke excellent English, although they conversed freely in Dutch among themselves, and many of the people, especially the children, were thoroughly Dutch in their appearance.

The streets in the village were hardly more than paths, for there are no wheeled vehicles in Saba; and in many places they were bordered with stone walls often higher than the boys' heads. The houses were neat and pretty, with green wooden "jalousies" or blinds about the verandas and on every hand were little gardens of yams, arrowroot, beans, corn and potatoes, with broad-leaved bananas and feathery palms everywhere, while gorgeous flowers and handsome vines filled the dooryards and clambered over the houses.

Nobody seemed very busy. The colored folk lounged or strolled aimlessly about; children played in streets and doorways, and on the balconies of some of the houses the boys caught sight of stout, elderly Dutchmen smoking long porcelain pipes.

In one place the boys came upon a little open yard, where, among the lumber, boards and shavings that littered the spot, several men were busily engaged in building a boat!

"That's the funniest thing we've seen yet," cried Paul in surprise. "What in the world are they building a boat for 'way up here? Is there any lake or river in the crater?"

"No," replied his father, laughing. "There's not a pond, river or lake on the entire island; but that boat is not intended to sail fresh water, but salt. The oddest thing about the Sabans is that their prin-

cial occupation is boat building. Every stick, timber and plank is brought here from other islands and is carried up the 'ladder' on people's heads; and when the boats are finished they're hauled to the edge of the island and lowered over the side exactly as if the volcano was a ship and they were launching the life-boats. Moreover, these Saban craft are noted for their speed, strength and stanchness, and always bring a high price from the people of the other islands; you'll see them in use at nearly every place we stop."

The party soon returned to the *Cormorant*, the anchor was weighed, the launch swung to its davits, and the yacht headed for St. Kitts, the boys waving their hats in farewell to the little group of Sabans who stood on the "ladder" and watched them depart.

The sun was sinking below the horizon before they passed Eustatius, and the massive sugar-loaf-shaped cone loomed black against the lurid western sky.

After supper Mr. Rogers insisted on the boys turning in at once; for he said there would be nothing of interest until St. Kitts was reached, and they would no doubt wake up when the boat came to anchor.

The boys were aroused by the sound of voices, and much to their surprise found that it was broad day-

light and that the *Cormorant* was riding quietly at anchor.

Rapidly jumping into their clothes, they rushed on deck and found the yacht moored close to the long iron dock before the pretty town of Basse-terre. A very light-colored mulatto, dressed in a white uniform, was standing on the deck examining the yacht's papers and talking to Mr. Rogers, while alongside was a little white yawl-boat manned by four uniformed black sailors.

Beyond the iron wharf was a large handsome building, and on either side and behind this were warehouses, stores and houses with the square-topped tower of a church in the background. Back of all, smooth, pale green cane fields stretched mile after mile to the slopes of the towering mountains.

"My! but those *are* mountains," exclaimed Paul. "I don't wonder father told us St. Thomas was just 'hilly' compared to this. See, Harry, how that cloud drifts across that highest peak yonder."

"Yes, and look at those rows of cocoanut palms along the shore," said Harry.

"And at those great palms beyond the big building," cried Paul.

Mr. Rogers now joined them as the custom-house boat left.

"What *is* that biggest mountain, father?" asked Paul.



The massive sugar-loaf-shaped cone of Statia against the western sky



The pretty town of Basseterre with Monkey Hill beyond

“That is Mount Misery. The lower one down the coast is Fort Brimstone, and this rounded smooth-sided hill back of the town is Monkey Hill. I expect to stay several days in St. Kitts, to visit an old friend; and we may have an opportunity to go on a monkey hunt.”

“A monkey hunt?” exclaimed Paul. “Why, I didn’t know monkeys were found on the islands.”

“They’re not natives,” replied his father, “but descendants of apes brought from Gibraltar by the soldiers stationed here many years ago. They are now wild and very numerous in many places, and prove a great nuisance to the farmers and planters. The people consider them excellent eating, and monkey hunts are one of the favorite sports of the island. The only other island where they occur is Grenada, I believe, and there they are also extensively hunted.”

Breakfast was now served, and while they ate, the boys, amused, watched the boats which surrounded the yacht, and the scores of diving boys begging for coins to be thrown overboard. They noticed that these boatmen and diving boys were mainly pure black, and that they were far more ragged and unkempt than in the Danish or Dutch islands.

Breakfast over, the party entered the launch and landed at the dock, from which they walked through

an arched passage under the Custom House into a little open rounded space with a number of streets radiating from it. In the center was a large monument, and about the edges of the little circle were a number of immense royal palms.

"The royal palms are the most beautiful and stately of the family," said Mr. Rogers. "They're useful as well as ornamental, and in many places they serve the natives for as many purposes as the reindeer serves the Laplander. The wood is used for building; the leaves for thatch and for weaving into mats and baskets; the berries are made into preserves; and the tender green leaf bud in the center is eaten as a salad, or cooked as a vegetable, and is known as 'mountain cabbage.' To secure the cabbage means the death of the tree, and yet in many of the islands the 'cabbages' may be purchased for ten or twelve cents each, and the mountain sides are covered with dead palms from which the hearts have been ruthlessly torn. There's yet another product of the palm which is still stranger. This is the larva of a big beetle which infests the trees killed by the removal of the bud. These worms are known as groo-groo worms, and are considered great delicacies in some of the islands."

"Ugh! I'd hate to think of eating crawling, squirming worms," said Paul.

His father laughed. "That's a matter of cus-



In the center was a monument, and about the edges of the circle
were immense royal palms



A park filled with palms and fountains

tom, Paul. Many of our dishes would seem just as distasteful to the natives of some countries. As a matter of fact, groo-groo worms are neither disgusting nor distasteful when cooked. They're fat, white grubs, and when roasted on thin strips of palm leaves over an open fire look and taste much like roasted chestnuts. I've eaten them myself and found them excellent."

"Well, I don't want to try them," insisted Paul, "but if I once ate them without knowing it I suppose I *might* like them also."

Quite a little crowd of men, women and boys had gathered about the party from the yacht as they stood admiring the granite-like trunks of the palms. Turning to an intelligent appearing boy in white duck clothes, Mr. Rogers asked if he could guide them to Mr. Andrews' home.

When the party had approached within a few yards of the house, a tall gentleman rushed down the steps and grasped Mr. Rogers' hand. "Well, I'll be hanged, Rogers, who'd ever have expected to see you in this out-of-the-world place? My! but I'm glad to see you, old man. When and how did you arrive anyway? I didn't know a ship was in. So these are the boys! Son and nephew, eh! Welcome to the islands, my boys. Had your breakfast yet? Well, well, you Americans *are* early birds. But you'll have another with us anyway. How long

are you stopping? Rogers, let me hear all the news."

Mr. Rogers laughed heartily as he seated himself in a chair on the stone veranda beside his old friend. "Will," he said, "you're just the same as ever. We arrived this morning before daylight in the *Cormorant*. I sold her to Captain Perkins down in Barbados; and in order to have a last cruise, and to give the boys a trip to the islands, I agreed to deliver her in person. Made the run to St. Thomas in eight days; stopped over at St. Croix and Saba; and count on having a few days here with my good old friend, Will Andrews."

"Bully for you, Charlie," cried Mr. Andrews. "Send out for your traps and stay right here. My! but won't Mabel be surprised! She hasn't seen you since you were a youngster the size of Paul there, when you first came down to the islands. John and Alice are over at Nevis visiting their uncle. I'm sorry they're not here. Tell you what we'll do, Rogers, before you leave we'll run across in your bally old tub and surprise them. Your boys will find a lot of interest in old Nevis, and we'll have a regular picnic on the estate there. Uncle Fred has taken to raising cotton, and the place is picking up marvelously. Ah! here's Mabel now."

Mr. Rogers and the boys rose at Mrs. Andrews' approach. She was a pleasant-faced, plump little



A well-to-do West Indian home



The large, cool room, with the walls merely slatted blinds and lattice
work

lady, who stepped onto the veranda with a great bunch of fragrant lilies in her hand.

"Ah! old friend," she cried, as she extended her hand to Mr. Rogers. "Indeed it is a lang time since we saw you, but I'm na surprised. Willie has a veery penetratin' voice, an' when I heerd him spielin to 'Charlie' and about Mabel bein' surprised, I kenned well the welcome visitor we had. But you must be fair famished. Breakfast is ready, so come alang all."

It was the first opportunity the boys had enjoyed of seeing the interior of a well-to-do West Indian home, and the first really West Indian meal they had eaten and they were vastly interested and pleased at all they saw and tasted.

The large, bare, cool room with the walls merely slatted blinds and open ornamental lattice work; the big earthen "monkey-jars" for cooling water; the beautiful old English mahogany furniture and antique silver, glass and chinaware, all were new and strange to the American boys' eyes. The neat barefooted waitress, with her head bound in a bright colored turban, the numerous strange but tasty foods and the delicate fruits, were all a revelation.

The West Indian breakfast was, the boys discovered, the principal meal of the day, the early morning coffee taking the place of the American breakfast. The noonday meal was omitted, and tea in

the mid-afternoon was followed by dinner in the evening.

Both the boys were greatly interested in the dainty little house lizards or "chameleons" that ran about and sunned themselves on window and door sills, or scuttled rapidly across the floors, or over the walls, or even ventured onto the table or chairs occasionally.

"Yes," said Mr. Andrews to the boys' questions, "they're harmless and useful chaps. If there are flies, ants or any other insects about the lizards gobble them up in no time. We never disturb them, and they become very tame."

"I wondered why there were not more flies," remarked Paul. "I suppose the lizards eat them all up."

"The lizards eat all they can find," replied their host, "but if the poor things depended on flies for a living they'd starve to death. Flies are not a pest here the way they are in most places, but I must admit we've plenty of other insects to trouble us. For instance, there are the wood-ants. These insects eat away the timbers and boards of the buildings, destroy books and pictures, and even gnaw away the entire inside of furniture, leaving a mere shell which falls to pieces at a touch. They're not so common in the towns as in the country, but we're obliged to be on the watch for them continually.

But come, we must make the most of your stay. What do you say to a drive into the hills and around the shore road? When we return we'll get your traps from the yacht."

CHAPTER VI

THE MONKEY HUNT

NEVER had the two boys enjoyed such a ride as the one they took with Mr. Andrews over the roads of beautiful St. Kitts. Passing out of the town, the road gradually ascended between broad fields of waving cane and under rows of palms, with the mountains to the left rising upward in green-clad slopes to the cloud-wreathed summit of Mount Misery.

From the top of the rise they could look back over the town and harbor and across the sparkling sea to the dim shadows that marked Saba and Eustatius, while to the south the conical mountains of Nevis rose far into the sky across the narrow strait that separates it from the shores of St. Kitts. Everywhere on the road the colored people smiled and greeted them pleasantly, and the boys marveled at the enormous loads that many of the people carried on their heads. The climax was reached when a buxom negro woman passed them with a broad palm hat on the back of her turban and a

bottle of oil standing upright from the brim which rested across the middle of her head.

“One would think these people didn’t have hands,” laughed Harry. “They seem to carry everything on their heads and it doesn’t appear to trouble them in the least. Just see those two girls over yonder. They’re talking and chasing each other about and yet each has a tray of fruit on her head.”

“Yes, they are adept at ‘heading’ things,” agreed Mr. Andrews, “but they’re not as remarkable in that direction as the natives of the more southern islands. In some of these the waitresses bring the food to the table on their heads, and an amusing story is told of the captain of police on one of the islands. It seems that the man had just come out from England and was having a garden made. He noticed that as the men removed the earth they shoveled it into trays and carried it away on their heads, and as he considered this a very slow and laborious method, he sent for a number of wheelbarrows. These he turned over to the workmen, who seemed very glad to get them, and a little later the captain visited his garden to see how the work was progressing. Two of the men had just filled a wheelbarrow with earth and the captain gasped in amazement as he saw the

fellows calmly lift wheelbarrow and all and place it on the head of one of the men!"

Presently they came to a large sugar mill, and Mr. Andrews suggested they should stop and look through it, for in this mill they refined the sugar.

As they stood looking down at the busy scene within the mill, Paul noticed a couple of negroes wading about bare-legged in a large bin of coarse brown sugar. "Why, how dirty that stuff must be," he exclaimed. "I'll never eat brown sugar again."

"Oh, they always wash their feet before stepping in the bin," replied the overseer.

"See, here come a couple of new men. Just watch and you'll see how careful they are."

Sure enough, the men carried a large tub of water, which they placed on the floor; then sitting upon the low side of the bin they washed their feet. Turning about, they stepped into the sugar; and reaching over the edge of the bin lifted the tub of water and dumped it into the sugar! The joke was certainly on the overseer.

"Well, it doesn't make any difference, the sugar's all refined after that anyway," he remarked.

Reëntering the carriage, the party continued on their drive, stopping at several attractive country places to visit friends of their host, and finally reaching the fine shore road that, between the



The road led under palms, with the mountains rising in green-clad slopes

creaming surf on one hand and the rich tropical verdure on the other, encircles the island, sometimes close to the sea, at other times high on some cliff.

The hours passed rapidly, and the boys felt they had not seen half enough of the island when Mr. Andrews turned toward home. At one place they stopped at the crest of a hill, and their host pointed out Fort Brimstone, close at hand.

“That old fort was at one time known as the ‘Gibraltar of the West Indies,’ ” he said. “It was built and fortified at enormous expense, and was strongly garrisoned for many years, but was never actually used in warfare. It’s a great resort for monkeys! To-morrow we’ll come over for a monkey hunt.”

It was late in the afternoon when they at last drove into Basseterre and stopped at the “Circus,” as the little palm-encircled space by the dock is called.

A signal to the *Cormorant* brought the launch alongside the dock, and all went aboard the yacht to obtain the baggage they required for their stay ashore.

Mr. Andrews was immensely pleased with the little ship. “Why, Rogers,” he exclaimed, “you *are* a lucky dog! I’d like nothing better than to knock about in this craft for months at a time. Well, I envy old Perkins after he gets her. I never sup-

posed any craft of this size could be so roomy and comfortable."

The clothing, guns, fishing-tackle and other "traps" were soon ready, and with directions as to shore-leave to Rami and the sailors, Mr. Rogers left the *Cormorant* in charge of Tom. The party drove into the Andrews' garden just as the sun sank below the horizon, and the boys were then for the first time introduced to a West Indian bath. The tub was a huge stone and cement affair ten feet square and four feet deep, filled with the clear cool water from the mountain stream. A plunge and rub, and they felt very much refreshed, and sat down to their evening meal with sharpened appetites.

The evening was spent in planning the proposed monkey hunt for the morrow and the boys were very curious to learn all they could of the habits of the animals, their haunts and how they were hunted.

"They live in so-called high woods," said Mr. Andrews, "but at night come down to the cane fields and gardens and play havoc with the crops. In former years they were very abundant and did a great deal of damage, but they've been hunted so extensively that they're now very shy.

"We hunt them very much as you hunt squirrels in the States. We reach their haunts early in the

morning, separate, and by moving noiselessly to some likely spot sit silently until we see or hear one of the creatures. It's then a question of woodcraft and stalking. You'll find that a monkey has about as sharp eyes and ears as any animal there is.

"Let me caution you beforehand to be sure and get within range of the game before shooting, for they are tough creatures and if merely wounded will get away every time to suffer and die. While I approve of hunting the apes, as they are a real pest and moreover are good eating, yet I never like to think that I've caused any animal unnecessary suffering. But let's get off to bed now; we'll have to start long before sun up, and it's getting late."

Dawn was just lighting the eastern sky the next morning when the hunters arrived at the base of Fort Brimstone mountain. Leaving the horse and carriage at the foot of the slope, they entered a rough path and started up the gentle ascent through rank vegetation. A few moments later they reached a tiny clearing filled with bananas, fruit trees and vegetable gardens, with a small thatched hut at one side. Smoke was rising from the little hearth outside the door, and beside it a squatting negro woman was roasting coffee.

Mr. Andrews asked her if the monkeys had been about lately, and much to the hunters' satisfaction, she replied that several times within the past few

days the apes had visited the garden. She added that "Pete" could guide them to the haunts of a troop of apes that he had found a few days previously.

Peter proved to be a ragged black urchin, clothed mainly in an old tattered shirt and a broad grin, and carrying a battered and handleless cutlass or machete in his hand.

He assured the party that he could show them monkeys, and without waiting for further orders took the lead and plunged into the bush.

For a long time the party toiled steadily upward through the jungle, climbing over fallen trees, pushing through tangles of vines and palmettos, and scrambling over rocky ledges. Gradually the brush gave way to large trees, and at last they found themselves far up on the mountain and in the real "high woods," where the great trees were hung and draped with lianas, or hanging vines, air plants and a multitude of strange and wonderful forms of plant life.

Here Pete stopped the party and detailed his plans for the hunt. He stated that the troop of apes inhabited a deep ravine a short distance ahead, which extended from high up on the mountain, and that the best scheme was for the party to separate, one going to the head of the ravine, one to the foot, and one on either side; and that when all were stationed he would walk through the gully, so that

the monkeys, disturbed by his presence, might expose themselves to the waiting hunters.

This appeared to be a reasonable and good idea and a few moments later the two boys, Mr. Rogers and Mr. Andrews were hidden at the various points selected, and Pete started through the woods of the ravine.

Harry was stationed at the lower end of the hollow, and waited silently and patiently in the damp, shadowy depths of the forest. Slowly the minutes passed and no sound broke the stillness, save the occasional rustle of a lizard among the fallen leaves, or the morning song of some woodland bird far up in the tree-tops.

Suddenly there was the roar of a gun in the woods above him on the mountain side, followed by weird cries and howls. A moment later something came crashing through the tree-tops at Harry's right, and he caught a glimpse of dark creatures leaping from tree to tree a hundred feet above the earth.

He raised his gun to shoot; but recollecting Mr. Andrews' caution not to wound a monkey, he lowered his weapon and watched the apes as they jumped and scurried through the trees and disappeared. Presently the sounds of their flight ceased; and Harry, listening, heard a low chattering in the trees some distance away.

Evidently, the frightened monkeys had stopped

and were resting in the trees, so Harry at once made up his mind to stalk them. With the utmost caution, he quietly worked his way from tree to tree, skulking in the shadows, and ever drawing closer and closer to the spot from which issued the chattering sounds until he was directly beneath the trees wherein the monkeys were concealed. Carefully he scrutinized the tree-tops, but for some time nothing resembling a monkey was visible. He had almost given up in despair when a protuberance, that he had taken for a knot, moved slowly, and Harry's heart thumped with excitement as the brown lump raised itself on all fours and walked along the branch.

Cautiously Harry raised his gun, but the motion, slow and silent as it was, alarmed the apes; and before the boy could shoot they again dashed off through the forest.

So rapid were their movements and so uncertain the light that Harry could not get a shot; and, oblivious to direction, he again hurried off in pursuit of the retreating monkeys. Further and further into the woods the chase led, and presently the underbrush became thicker and the trees and vines closer, until Harry had difficulty in forcing his way through.

The apes were now but a short distance ahead, evidently having overcome their fright, and the boy

was confident that in a few moments he could approach within range.

Pressing as quietly as possible through the dense mass of vines and brush, he saw before him crumbling walls and broken embrasures, and he realized that he had reached the ruins of the old fort. There was a small open space covered with low growth between him and the walls, and on the farther side of this Harry caught a glimpse of a large ape slowly climbing a tree. This was his chance; throwing up his gun he took a quick shot, and the monkey came crashing to the ground. Elated with his success, Harry broke into a run across the open space to secure his game.

He had covered perhaps half the distance when suddenly the earth gave way beneath his feet, and the next instant he was plunging down, down, down, into utter darkness.

CHAPTER · VII

A GRUESOME DISCOVERY

WHEN Harry regained consciousness he found himself lying face down upon a pile of dead leaves and trash in utter darkness. At first he could not remember what had happened, but gradually the events preceding his fall came back to him, and he realized that he must have dropped into one of the old fort's subterranean chambers, of which Mr. Andrews had warned him.

Turning over, he looked up, and saw far above the glimmer of light through the narrow opening into which he had fallen. It seemed very distant, indeed, and Harry wondered how he had managed to drop so far without serious injury; but as he rose and felt for projections by which he might be able to crawl out of the hole, he discovered that the inlet to his prison was merely a round tunnel, or shaft, barely large enough to admit his body. Evidently he had shot down, feet first, like a package of mail through a chute and had landed on the bed of leaves, which had sifted through the opening during countless years.

It was useless to attempt climbing to the open air, for the masonry was smooth, and where bits of mortar or stone projected they were so soft and rotten that they crumbled away at a touch.

The boy was somewhat frightened, but he thought that no doubt his friends would miss him and hearing his shot would hurry in his direction; and if he called out at frequent intervals they would soon hear and locate him. He hallooed at the top of his lungs, the cell reverberating to his cries. Then he waited a few moments and called again, but there was no answering shout from above, and suddenly it occurred to the boy that he might have been unconscious for hours, while his friends searched the woods. Reaching for his watch and striking a match, he glanced at the dial. It was ten minutes of nine; and allowing for the time he had waited in the ravine, and the time spent stalking the apes, he realized that he must have been in the underground hole fully two hours.

His heart sank at the thought. His friends might have passed and repassed the opening among the brush a dozen times while he lay unconscious underground.

Harry was now becoming thoroughly frightened. The darkness was oppressive; but still he thought there must be some way of escape. Possibly there was another entrance to the vault. He struck an-

other match, and looked about. Before him he could see the sides of the chamber, smooth, round and arching from the floor to the roof, in the center of which was the shaft through which he had fallen. Not another opening or door was visible. It was merely a beehive-shaped vault with an opening in the apex some six feet above the floor. In one hurried survey Harry took in the entire chamber before the match flickered out; but with its last glimmer he caught sight of some whitish objects lying close to the wall behind him.

Anxious to discover what the things were, he struck another match and stepped forward. The next instant he gave a startled cry, and dropping the match sprang back. Before him, glimmering in the uncertain light of the match, was a human skeleton!

Although Harry was not a superstitious boy, nor easily startled, the sight of the grinning skull and white bones was enough to try the stoutest nerves; and for a few moments the boy huddled against the wall furthest from his gruesome find, shivering with fright.

Gradually his common sense overcame his fears, and he began reasoning with himself. The bones of the poor unfortunate, whoever he was, were certainly harmless, and as his first terror was overcome,

Harry began to wonder who the man was who had left his bones here in the subterranean chamber.

Harry was anxious to have another view of his find, and was about to strike another light when he remembered that his stock of matches was limited. Feeling about in his various pockets, he at last found a piece of paper; and rolling this into a long cone, and twisting it tightly, he formed a taper, which would outlast a number of matches and would provide a far better light. Igniting this, Harry again approached the skeleton. There could be no doubt about it, the man had been chained to a weight, and the great length of time which had elapsed since he had died was proved by the thick coating of rust on the iron, and the way in which the links of the chain had become solidified into a solid mass.

Harry's interest in the chained skeleton had now overcome his fears; and, stooping to examine the bones more closely, he caught sight of a small cylindrical object lying on the floor near one of the bony hands. As he picked it up the tiny paper torch went out in a last flicker of flame.

The cylinder was quite heavy, and even in the darkness Harry knew it was of metal. Feeling it over carefully, he found it smooth and without a cover or projection of any sort, and about the size of a shotgun cartridge. He shook it to see if it contained anything, but no sound issued from

within. He was still examining it and striving to guess what it might be when he started violently. Something came rattling down through the shaft over his head. The next instant he heard the sound of a human voice, faint and far away, from the opening above. His heart leaped with joy at the sound, and lustily he shouted; and looking up he saw the hole half obscured by someone's head.

"Yo' arl right dar, Bass?" came the thin voice in answer to Harry's cry, and the prisoner shouted back that he was unhurt.

"Who is it?" shouted Harry. "Hurry up and get me out of here."

"I, Pete, Bass. Hol' on a li'l time mo', an' we hav yo' out o' dar, Bass."

The next second Pete's head disappeared, and Harry heard the muffled, distant sound of a gunshot. Pete's head again appeared and he called down: "Jes hol' fas' as Ah cut a rope, Bass." Then he again disappeared.

A few minutes later the head again darkened the opening, and Pete called down: "Mak' fas' da rope, Bass, an' we hist yo' up O. K." His words were followed by the descent of a strong liana or bush rope through the shaft.

"But you can't pull me up, Pete," shouted Harry as he fastened the vine under his arms. "You're not strong enough."

“Ah knows yo’ speak true, Bass,” shouted the negro boy. “Da gentlemen’s a comin’ larng now, Bass.”

Another moment and Harry heard other voices above, and Mr. Rogers shouted down, asking Harry if he was unhurt and ready. When he heard the reply he uttered a fervent “Thank God, my boy”; and Harry felt the rope tighten as willing hands pulled from above.

The next instant his feet left the floor, and he slowly ascended through the narrow shaft; and within a few moments he stood once more in the air and sunshine.

Paul, Mr. Rogers and Mr. Andrews crowded around, shaking hands and expressing thanks and congratulations at Harry’s safe delivery and more than one eye was moist. In a few words Harry told them how the accident had happened and related the finding of the skeleton and the odd metal cylinder, which he drew from his pocket.

“My poor boy!” cried his uncle, “you must have spent a fearful hour down there with only that skeleton for company. After Andrews shot his monkey we started down the ravine, and expected to find you where we’d left you posted. As we stood wondering where you’d gone we heard a shot in the distance. We searched all over the mountain side, calling and shouting, but had no answer and finally

we became convinced that something was wrong.

Pete was the hero of the hour; never in his life had he been made so much of, and everyone insisted that something must be done as a fitting reward for his services. Suddenly Paul exclaimed: "I have it, father. Why not take him along with us? We can take him to New York, send him to school and if he wants to come back he'll be fitted to make something of his life down here."

"That's a fine scheme, Paul," replied his father heartily. Turning to the negro boy, he asked: "What do you think of it, Pete? Would you like to go with us and go to school in America?"

Pete's eyes opened wide with wonder and surprise.

"Ah surely be well pleased, Sah, but how can do fo' ol' Mammy, Bass? Ah boun' to stop wif her, Sah."

"That will be all right, Pete," cried Mr. Andrews. "I'll see that your mother is taken care of."

"I wonder what the queer metal thing is," mused Harry as they walked down the mountain side. "As soon as we get to town I'm going to find out."

In a comparatively short time Pete's house was reached, and his mother was informed of what had occurred and the new life before him. The old woman was greatly pleased, and felt sure that her son would return and become wealthy and a great

man. Pete was to remain with his mother until the party left on the yacht, and Mr. Andrews told him that he would send the groom with clothes and other necessities in the afternoon.

The party then bade good-by to Pete and his mother, and made their way to the carriage.

Arriving at the house, Harry's monkey was sent to the kitchen with directions to be very careful of the skin, which the boy was to keep as a souvenir.

A bath and a change did much to refresh the hot and tired hunting party, and all gathered in the shade of the veranda to talk over the events of the day and the future of Pete and his mother.

The conversation soon turned to the underground dungeon, the skeleton and the metal cylinder. The cylinder was apparently of lead or pewter and could be easily cut with a knife, and after the dirt and outer surface was scraped off it could be seen that one end had been soldered or melted into place.

"It evidently belonged to the dead man," remarked Mr. Andrews, "and it must be hollow or 'twould be heavier. I have an idea that it contains something, and if Harry is agreeable I vote we cut it open and see what's within."

Mr. Andrews cut away the end of the cylinder with his pocket knife. The cylinder was hollow; and glancing within, he exclaimed, "Yes, there *is* something inside. Looks like a roll of paper."

Handing it to Harry, he added: "Here, lad, it's your find; you must be the first to see what it contains."

Harry inserted his finger carefully in the cylinder, and drew forth a little roll of parchment, yellow and stained, but still in a good state of preservation, and tied with a wisp of rotten sail twine, which broke apart as the roll was drawn forth.

Everyone pressed close about as Harry carefully spread the parchment on the table and disclosed the surface covered with faded but legible lines, marks and words. For a moment they looked at it in silence, and then as it dawned on them what it was Paul shouted, "It's a map! I'll bet it's a pirate's map of hidden treasure!"

"More likely the plan of some fort," said Mr. Andrews. "The skeleton was in all likelihood that of some spy, and very probably he was cast into prison on account of refusing to give up this very map. But we'll soon find out by a careful study. Let's move it into a good light, and see what we can make of it."

Acting on this suggestion, the table was moved and the map spread out and held in position by pins; and everyone studied it carefully. The lines indicated wooded land and the neighboring shores, and here and there were inscriptions in quaint old English script. Studying the various words minutely,

and puzzling them out, all were silent for a moment. Then Harry cried suddenly: "You're right, Paul; it *is* a map of treasure. See, here in this spot it says, "Ye cheste of Platte & Jewelle oppositt agt ye walle wherebye yt may be found as ff'th."

"I *do* believe you're right, boy," cried Mr. Rogers excitedly. "It certainly does mention the treasure. Bring a glass, Will, till we see if we can read this fine writing on the edge."

Mr. Andrews soon returned with a reading glass; and holding it over the fine faded writing on one edge of the paper, Mr. Rogers slowly read off: "Beyond the wall one hundred paces; until the point of the reef is in line with the cliff-side and hence ten paces from the coral cliff, at the point whereon strikes the sun through the rift at dawn, lieth the cavern and herein well hidden by the rock above, lieth the great treasure chests of the galleon and to guard it well lieth there also the body of the captain taken with his ship."

"My, but isn't this exciting!" exclaimed Paul. "Just imagine Harry picking up a real pirate's map of treasure beside that skeleton. He must have been a pirate himself. And to think about reading the real pirate's writing after all these years and reading how the galleon's captain was buried with the treasure. Why it's just like a story in a book."

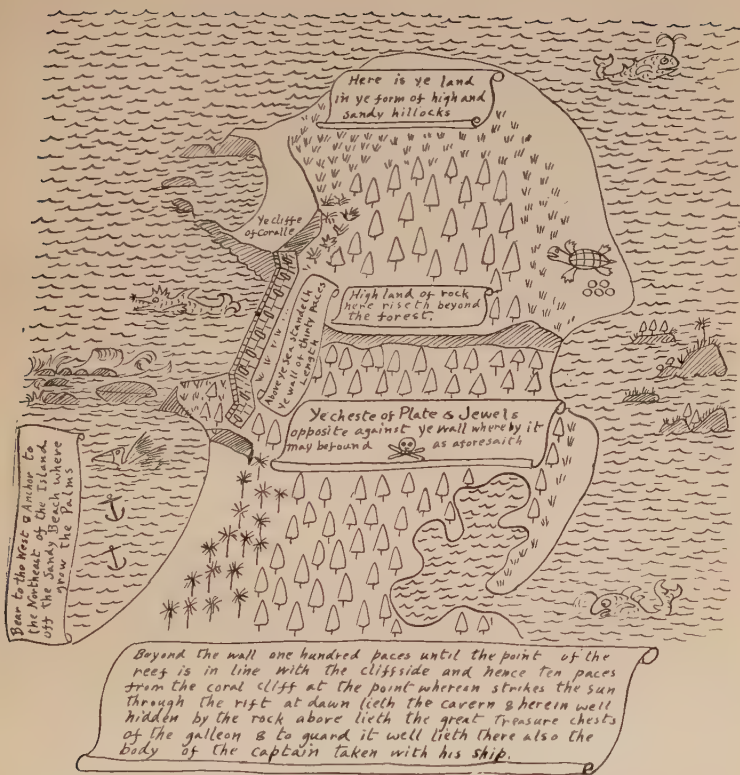
"It certainly *is* romantic and interesting," said

Mr. Rogers, "but I don't see any way of finding out where the treasure is. There's nothing I can see to tell us whether the place is an island or the mainland; and the trees, caves, cliffs and other landmarks are so crude that they might refer to almost any place in the tropics."

"Hold on," interrupted Mr. Andrews. "It *is* on an island, after all; see, here on this place, it says, 'Bear to ye West and anchor to ye northeast of ye island off ye sandy beach where grow ye palms.'"

"But it might be *any* island, and there are hundreds of them," said Harry dolefully. "Just the same I think we might find it. We'll have to look on every island we see, and if we find a spot that's like the map we'll know we've found the place."

"Well, my boy," laughed his uncle. "It will certainly be fun for you boys to search for your treasure; and I admit you've far more authoritative information to go on than many treasure seekers. But you mustn't be disappointed. Even if you *did* identify the spot you might not find the treasure. Doubtless, more than one of the pirates knew its hiding place and they may have returned and secured it. Or it may have been found at any time during the two centuries and more that it's been hidden, for judging by the script and the parchment it must have been at least two hundred years ago



Harry's copy of the pirates' map

that the galleon was captured and the chests buried."

"Let me suggest something," remarked Mr. Andrews. "Whether or not you ever find the place, the map is of historical value and should be carefully preserved. I think it would be a good idea to make a careful copy of it, with the old script translated into plain English, and use the duplicates for your search. Better replace the original in its case and keep it safe from wear and injury."

"That's a mighty good idea, Will," agreed Mr. Rogers. "Get to work and make a copy right away. You'll have time before dinner, boys."

Mr. Andrews brought paper and pens and ink, and the boys found it an interesting occupation copying the map, each of them making a separate copy, while Mr. Andrews and Mr. Rogers helped by translating the quaint old English into modern words and spelling.

At last the maps were finished, and the original was carefully rolled and placed in the lead cylinder and given to Mr. Rogers for safe keeping. The maps were just completed when Mrs. Andrews appeared and announced that dinner was ready.

CHAPTER VIII

PIRATES AND PRISONERS

THE boys found stewed monkey an excellent dish after they had overcome their squeamishness sufficiently to taste it, and they vowed that never again would they judge the edible qualities of anything by external appearances.

During the meal the boys told Mrs. Andrews about the pirates' map and showed her the copies they had made.

"Weel, weel," she exclaimed, "this is fair wonderful. To think, lads, of finding the wee bit map in yon dead mon's hand, but I dinna see the name o' the island, laddies."

"That's just the trouble, Mabel," laughed Mr. Andrews. "The boys will have to search every island and key in the Antilles, and they can only identify the right one by the landmarks on the map. For all we know, it may be old St. Kitts itself."

"What a pity!" remarked his wife. "I ken the dead mon must a been a Scot to be so canny not to set down the island wi' the treasure. 'Twill be a sore puzzle for the lads, Willie."

“Well, they’ve already come nearer to finding a treasure than lots of other searchers,” laughed Mr. Rogers. “Many a man has spent time and money searching for pirates’ gold with only tradition and some charlatan’s divining-rod to guide him.”

“Yes, and there’s been many a treasure found too,” answered Mr. Andrews. “All we read in the books is not fiction. Time and again some poor black or colored chap suddenly gets rich in the islands, buys big estates, goes to Europe or America and lives like a prince the rest of his days. Treasure-trove is the only reasonable explanation of such suddenly acquired wealth. But of course the lucky fellow never tells of it. The law provides that half the treasure goes to the Crown, and it’s easier to keep it and keep mum than to give half of it up. I expect a great deal is found that the world never hears about. The fishermen and spongers find it oftener than anyone else, of course; but a good many planters and whites have become rich in a night also. But come; let’s go outside if we’re going to yarn. It’s cooler there.”

Seating themselves on the veranda in the cool evening air that was heavy with the scent of exotic flowers and tropical fruits, the boys began asking questions about the old pirates and their haunts.

“They frequented all the islands,” replied their host. “Many of them, such as Morgan, were really

more privateers than pirates, and preyed only upon ships of other nations than their own. Such fellows were safe and welcome in many ports, and old Morgan was even made governor of Jamaica. They seldom visited the larger towns, save for carousals and refitting, but lay in wait for their prey in unfrequented bays and lagoons, or among dangerous reefs where no one dared to follow. The west harbor of St. Thomas was a favorite resort, as were also the numerous bays and harbors about St. Johns, St. Martins and St. Barts. It's said that around those islands there are more sunken plate ships than in all the other West Indies combined.

“Then there was another lot of freebooters who captured and looted ships of any and all nations. These were the worst of all pirates, for they spared no one and foregathered at regular strongholds of their own. Tortuga Island off Haiti, the keys about Cuba and San Domingo, the Grenadines and the islands off the South American coast were all favorite haunts of these sea wolves. They seldom visited any settled islands or towns; and as they secured far more treasure than they could possibly spend, they must have cached a large amount from time to time. Of course a great deal of this was subsequently dug up by the pirates; but in many instances it must have been left undisturbed and forgotten.

“Oftentimes the pirate ships were sunk or captured, and every member of the crew was put to the sword, and the secret of their hidden loot died with them. Others were destroyed and a few members of the crew escaped. Sometimes these men carried the secret of their treasures with them, and in time doubtless made their way to the hiding places and recovered their ill-gotten gains and lived a life of affluence and seeming respectability afterward. Still others enlisted in the navy, or shipped as sailors, and were recognized and cast into prison; and a few, while drunk, bragged of their past deeds, or became mixed up in some drunken brawl, and were either hung or condemned to solitary confinement in chains.

“No doubt Harry’s skeleton friend was of this class. Very likely he was the pirate captain or an officer, and while awaiting an opportunity to reach his buried treasure was arrested on some serious charge and cast into the dungeon to die. But he may not have been a pirate at all. Perhaps he was a mutinous soldier or sailor, or merely a common felon who had obtained the map through theft or murder, or had found it on some dead pirate. There’s no way of knowing now and even if we had a history of the old fort and the convictions of prisoners I doubt if we could find his record. I believe there is an old record book which belonged to the

Governor-General at that time. It might be interesting to look it up and see if by chance we can find any record of a pirate ship captured, or a pirate sentenced at that period. We'll run over to the Government building to-morrow and see what's to be found. But I think it more than probable that any detailed records have long ago been lost, or destroyed, or are kept in Antigua or some other island."

After coffee the next morning Mr. Andrews suggested that they walk over to the Government buildings and look for the old records. This was agreeable, and the little party were welcomed by the officials, and the lists of records were turned over to them. At last Paul, looking through a ragged and discolored old book of miscellaneous papers, gave a little exclamation.

"Here's something," he cried. "It's about a pirate who was sentenced to be chained in a dungeon, and it might have been the very one whose skeleton Harry found. You read it, please, Mr. Andrews. I can hardly make out the queer, old-fashioned writing."

Mr. Andrews took the book and read as follows:

"An assize and generall Gaole deliverie held at St. Christophers Colonie from the nineteenth daye of Maye to ye 22nd. daye of the same Monthe 1701 Captain Josias Pendringhame Magistrate &C.

“The Jury of our Sovereigne Lord the Kinge Doe present Antonio Mendoza of Hispaniola and a subject of ye Kinge of Spain for that ye said on or about ye 11th. daye of April 1701 feloniously deliberately and malliciously and encontrarye to the laws of Almighty God and our Sovereigne Lord the Kinge did in his cupps saucely and arrogantly speak of the Governor and our Lord the Kinge and bye force and armes into the tavernne of John Wilkes Esq. did enter and there did Horrible sware and curse and did feloniously use threateninge words and did strike and cutte most murtherously severalle subjects of our Sovereigne Lord the Kinge.

“Of w’h Indictment he pleadeth not Guiltie but onne presente Master Samuel Dunscombe mariner did sware that said Antonio Mendoza was of his knowenge a Bloodthirsty pirate and Guiltie of diabolical practices & the Grand Inquest findinge yt a trewe bill to be tried by God and the Countrie w’h beinge a Jury of 12 men sworne find him Guiltie & for the same he be adjudged to be carried to ye Fort Prison to havve both his earres cutt of close by his head and be burnet throughe the tongge with an Hot iron and to be caste chained in ye dungeon to awaitte the pleasure of God and Our Sovereigne Lord the Kinge.”

“Isn’t that horrible!” exclaimed Harry as Mr. Andrews closed the book. “Just think of cutting

off a man's ears, burning his tongue and casting him in a dungeon to die just because he called names and swore when drunk, and had a fight with some other men."

"Yes," agreed Mr. Rogers, "and probably the fellows he 'murtherously struck and cutte' were as villainous as himself. I have no doubt the fact that he was a Spaniard and a Catholic had more to do with his severe sentence than anything else."

"Life was cheap in those days," remarked Mr. Andrews, "and men were put to death or mutilated for the slightest crimes. I'm surprised that poor Mendoza got off as easily as he did. Probably he succumbed to his tortures and died in the dungeon and was left to rot there. It might well have been his skeleton that you found, Harry; but there's no way of being sure. I've no doubt there were dozens of other unfortunates in the dungeons of the island at that time. Well, it's time for breakfast. Let's go home now and this afternoon we'll do the town and take things easy before our picnic to Nevis to-morrow."

At breakfast the boys told Mrs. Andrews of their discovery among the books, and read her the copy they had made of the record.

"Ah! the poor mon," she exclaimed sympathetically and added, "An' they clippet the ears and burnt the tongues of all that cursed in their cups

nowadays the land would be fair filled wi' deaf an' dumb."

"And I don't know but that would be a blessing, too," laughed her husband.

A little later as Mr. Andrews and the visitors started forth on their tour of the town she called out, "Dinna forget to show the laddies the jail, Willie. Sin' they read how we treated yon poor pirate mon 'tis but fair they ken how weel we treat criminals now."

"All right, Mabel," called back Mr. Andrews, chuckling. "We'll go there first of all, but if I'm not greatly mistaken the boys will think we run to extremes down here. It's harder to keep the men out of jail than to keep them in nowadays."

The party passed along several clean streets, bordered by tidy houses, and up a little hill to the jail, a low stone building in a large compound surrounded by a high stone wall, surmounted by broken bottles set in cement,—a cheval-de-frise of jagged glass that was seen on countless walls in all the islands.

At the broad gateway in the wall two uniformed black policemen were seated comfortably on an up-turned soap box and an old chair, but they rose stiffly and touched their helmets as the visitors entered.

Within the grounds the party was met by an elderly colored Corporal, who was to act as guide,

and who proudly displayed a Victoria Cross on his breast.

“Fo’ mah services to Her Majesty in the Sudan, Sah,” he explained.

Stepping across the smooth courtyard, with its bright-leaved crotons and waving palms, the party entered the jail proper, a cool, stone building with wide corridor and ample ventilation. Just within the doorway several negroes, dressed in white-drill suits, covered with the black broad arrows, which indicated they were convicts, were busily engaged at some occupation beside a long wooden table. Stepping closer the boys found that they were stamping the broad arrow marks upon a roll of white drill. One man held the roll of cloth, which stretched across the boards to where a second man rolled it up as fast as it was decorated with the black markings, while between these two a couple of other convicts stamped the “turkey tracks,” as Mr. Andrews called them, upon the drill.

All four prisoners were conversing and joking and their sleek, smiling faces would never have led anyone to believe them to be convicts.

“That seems like pretty easy work,” remarked Harry. “I suppose before they were sent up those men did the hardest kind of manual labor. It must be quite a vacation for them to be well clothed and

only compelled to stand here where it's cool and stamp that cloth."

"Yes, Sah; but they's trusty men, Sah," explained their guide.

A little further down the corridor the Corporal threw open the doors of the cells and, looking within, the visitors saw large airy rooms, twelve or fifteen feet square, but bare of furniture. Some were empty; but in others black and colored men were squatted on the floor engaged in various occupations, some picking apart coconut husks, others making nets, while one black Hercules had pillowed his head on a pile of the coconut-fiber and was snoring soundly.

"You don't seem to care much whether the prisoners work or not," laughed Mr. Rogers.

"O yas, Sah," replied the old Corporal. "But we leave it to theyselves, Sah. If they don' work they don' be fed, Sah. O yes, indeed, we keep they nose to the grin'stone, Sah."

"What do you do when they refuse to work or are mutinous?" asked Paul.

"Ah'll show you jus' now, Sah. This way, Sah," and the veteran led the way to a side corridor. Here he pointed out a dial on the wall bearing various figures and several clamps and screws and explained that this was connected with a crank within the cell and that the occupant was obliged to

turn the crank a certain number of times before he secured a meal. He then opened the cell and disclosed the occupant, a grinning brown man who rose from his seat on the floor and commenced to turn at the big iron crank at an order from the Corporal.

"Why, that doesn't appear very much of a punishment," said Mr. Rogers. "How many times is the man compelled to turn the crank to get his meal?"

"That depend', Sah. Fo' tha first time, maybe one hundred times, Sah, an' if he too lazy an' don' turn fo' he breakfas' the screws is tighten' up on the outside an' 'he has to work full hard fo' he dinner, Sah."

This novel method of making a refractory prisoner work for his meals amused the visitors and Mr. Rogers suggested that it might prove very efficacious if adopted in American prisons.

A little further down the corridor the guide stopped before a cell door and informed the party that he would now show the visitors a really desperate prisoner; in fact, one who was in solitary confinement in chains. The boys were greatly impressed and gathered close about their guide as he threw open the iron door.

As the portal swung open an undersized yellow youth roused himself suddenly from his siesta on the floor and hastily thrust his hands through iron

rings attached to a couple of light trace chains and rising to his feet stood at attention. Everyone burst into roars of laughter.

“Why, that boy can slip his chains off and on whenever he wants to,” laughed Harry. “When you opened the door he was sound asleep and his manacles were lying on the floor beside him.”

The old Corporal scratched his head and looked rather shamefaced. “Yes, Sah,” he remarked. “You see, Sah, the on’y chains we has is made fo’ big men, Sah, an’ they’s too large an’ commod’us fo’ this chap, Sah.”

The party now passed through a grated door and across an enclosed court with neat gardens and approached a second and smaller building which their guide informed them was the women’s prison. Here they found a number of girls and women working at cooking, washing and ironing and other similar occupations, while in the cells three or four more were engaged in picking over coconut-fiber and sewing convict garments. They all looked happy and content and seemed far better fed and dressed than their fellow women about the streets. Here also the visitors inspected the kitchens and saw the convicts’ food being prepared. Although simple and plain, consisting of boiled cornmeal, salt-fish, yams and bread, yet it appeared wholesome,

clean, and far better than the food to which the natives were accustomed when free.

Retracing their steps to the outer yard of the jail, the boys noticed an odd wooden cage-like affair under a shed and inquired what it was. The old Corporal explained that this was a "treadmill" which had been used in former times, but that it had been abandoned as "too harsh."

"How many prisoners have you here at present?" inquired Mr. Rogers.

"They's thirty-fo' now, Sah," replied the officer. "Sometimes we has as much as fifty, Sah."

"Well of all things," laughed the boys, "only fifty prisoners on an island of this size. The people certainly must be a peaceable lot."

"Do any of the convicts ever try to escape? I suppose the bottles on the walls are put there to prevent them."

"Yes, Sah, the bottles *do hinder* them, Sah. Yes, Sah, some time back a man escape, Sah. But he no St. Kitts boy, Sah. A French chap frum Guadeloupe, Sah, an' I spec' the islan' well rid o' he too, Sah."

Everybody was amused at his naïve remark and as they tipped him for his services and passed out through the gate Mr. Andrews remarked: "That jail may seem funny to you Americans, but the West Indian negroes are a quiet, inoffensive lot, and most

of those in jail are there for debt, for in the islands debtors are still jailed. The St. Kitts prison is no better than many of the others and it's seldom, indeed, that the prisoners attempt to escape or seem troubled by their incarceration. I remember an amusing story told of a visitor to little Tortola, one of the Virgin Islands. The tale was related by a gentleman who visited the island, and while riding along he noticed a negro sitting under a shady tamarind tree beside the road. Two days later he returned and, seeing the same man reclining beneath the tree, stopped and inquired why he remained in that particular spot. What was his surprise when the negro replied, 'Please, Sah, I'se in jail!' The tamarind tree was the only jail on the island!"

The party next visited the library, several of the churches, the pretty public gardens and the ice factory, and were surprised at the many modern innovations and improvements the little town possessed. In the late afternoon a drive was taken to a lovely sand beach a few miles from town, where the boys enjoyed a sea bath in the clear warm water, and the evening was spent talking over the trip to Nevis on the morrow.

The boys were greatly interested when they were told of the many historical associations of Nevis.

The fact that Alexander Hamilton was born on the island, that in its church Lord Nelson was married, and that in old days it was the favorite watering place and health resort for all the wealth and fashion of England and the islands, was all news to the boys; and Harry remarked that it was strange so little was said about the island in the books they had read.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Andrews, “even in England there’s a woeful lack of true knowledge about these British colonies. I remember the story an old army officer told me about his first experience with the West Indies. The old man received an appointment to Nevis and inquired of several persons where the place was. Few had ever heard of it, but finally one friend stated that it was in the West Indies. The officer then sought out a Gazette, and looking through its pages read the following: ‘Nevis. An island in the West Indies. One of the Leeward Islands. Famous for earthquakes, epidemics and hurricanes. Chief town submerged.’”

Amid the laughter that greeted the story Mrs. Andrews said, “Willie, dinna ye be so hard on my ain home. Nevis is a bonny spot, laddies, an’ wi’ no more hurricanes or sickness than elsewhere. But mind, lads, that ye see the submerged town; ’tis a great curiosity an’ no ither island has the like.”

“Indeed, yes, Mabel,” replied her husband, “old Nevis is a ‘bonny spot,’ as you say; and I for one will always speak well of it, for ’twas there I found you, my lass.”

CHAPTER IX

THE GORGEOUS ISLE

THE sun was barely above the horizon when the party boarded the *Cormorant*. The anchor was weighed, and with furled sails and under power, alone the yacht turned toward the open sea.

Passing the St. Anthony's Hills at the southern end of the island, the yawl headed for the towering, purple cone of Nevis, across the narrow strait, and two hours later dropped anchor off the landing place in Charlestown.

It was still early morning and the island looked very lovely from the sea; its broad cane fields stretching inland beyond the little town and the forest-clad sides of its mountain sloping upward to the clouds.

Early as it was the dock was crowded with ragged men, women and children,—a noisy, begging, but good-natured lot, who scattered and ran at a command from Mr. Andrews, whom they knew. As the party walked shoreward every loungee and each woman smiled and spoke; for Mrs. Andrews was a native of Nevis and on every hand was welcomed

by such cheery greetings as "Marnin', Madame Andrews," and "Praise tha Lord I see yo' well, Missus Mabel." Half a dozen boys had seized upon the luggage of the visitors and had hurried on ahead, with orders from Mr. Andrews to have a carriage ready, and the little party passed up the dock and reached the street, like a miniature triumphal procession.

It having been planned to give the Andrews' children a complete surprise, no word had been sent of the picnic, so the visitors were compelled to use a hired team for the drive to the cotton plantation.

The horse and carriage soon arrived, and amid the vociferous good wishes of the rabble of ragged natives the party drove through the little town toward the country. The boys saw that the town was in a very bad state of decay and neglect and could scarcely believe that once upon a time it had been the scene of brilliant balls and the gathering place of European society and wealth. Here and there, however, they saw tumbled-down walls of once splendid buildings, beautiful houses, and the great hotel, known as the Bath House, which had once been famous throughout the world.

As they drove along the level road, with the sparkling sea on one side and the waving green cane and lofty mountains on the other, they quite agreed that

Nevis was a "bonny spot" and wondered why it had been so abandoned and neglected.

"The whole trouble in a nutshell is sugar," Mr. Andrews said. "The prosperity of the islands was due to the sugar cane; but with the increasing production of cane in America and other localities, and the discovery of beet sugar, the islands rapidly became poor. West Indian planters couldn't compete with beet sugar and Louisiana cane, so one by one they abandoned the estates or went into bankruptcy. A few held on and managed to make a living; but the island's sugar days are over.

"Where new crops were introduced business and prosperity again increased, as in the islands where limes and cacao are grown. For instance, Dominica, for many years one of the most poverty-stricken islands, is now one of the most prosperous; and even poor, bankrupt and forlorn Montserrat is rapidly becoming prosperous through its lime industry. Most of the islands were supposedly unsuited for any crop except cane, and only recently it's been discovered that an extremely fine grade of sea-island cotton can be grown on many of these places. Nevis is one of these, and as soon as the local planters and colored folk can be induced to plant and cultivate cotton the island will pick up and become prosperous. The soils are very rich, the climates are healthy, labor and living are cheap, and only capi-

tal and industry are necessary to restore the islands to their former wealth. Uncle Fred was about the first man to plant cotton on Nevis, and he's doing very well and has bought land right and left to add to his fields. There's a future in store for the island, I'm sure. Ah! there's the house now. See, just around that next little hill, in that clump of palms."

As the carriage topped the little rise the boys looked down upon the broad fields of cotton, with their bursting white bolls and delicate yellow flowers.

A few minutes later they entered a long avenue of towering palms, and climbing a little hill drew rein before a broad, low bungalow in the midst of a grove of cocoanut palms, flaming poinciana trees and gorgeous flowers. Before they could alight, a stout, brown-bearded man came dashing down the steps, and grasping Mrs. Andrews and her husband by the hands, he shook them heartily.

Mr. Andrews introduced Mr. Rogers and the boys, and with hearty handshakes all round Uncle Fred, as everyone called him, led the way to the shady veranda.

"An' willna the kiddies be surprised to see ye!" he exclaimed. "'They're off on the mornin' ride in the hills."

The boys instantly took a great liking to Uncle Fred. He was so hearty, good-natured and with

such a boyish laugh that they were at home right away, and in a few minutes they felt as if he were an old friend.

Mr. Andrews explained their plans for a picnic; Uncle Fred at once became enthusiastic, but insisted that they must have breakfast first, look over the estate and picnic in the mountain woods in the afternoon.

"No, *Sir*," laughed Mr. Andrews. "That program may be all right for a tough old nut like you, Fred; but if you think we're going to fill ourselves with your food, tire ourselves out going over your old place and then climb the mountain this afternoon, you're mistaken. No, Sir, have your breakfast with us in the woods, spend the day and get back at evening. That's the plan, Fred, and this time Mabel and I are going to boss *you*, my boy."

"Weel, Willie, have your ain way," chuckled Uncle Fred, "but mind ye, I'll no' be givin' ye transportation to the town till I desire, an' ye'll stop wi' me till I mind ye to leave an' 'twill no' be tomorrow ye'll gang, my lad."

"All right, Fred," agreed Mr. Andrews. "I can stand it as long as you can; and Mabel, I know, doesn't object; and the boys here will find plenty of fun looking for their treasure."

This led to the story of Harry's find, and Uncle Fred, when shown the maps, insisted that the place



They entered a long avenue of palms

might be right on Nevis, and that certainly the search must be commenced here, at any rate.

While talking they were interrupted by the sound of hoof beats, and a moment later a boy and girl came racing their ponies up the drive.

They were overjoyed at the surprise of seeing their parents and welcomed Mr. Rogers and the boys and were greatly elated at the idea of the picnic in the woods.

John was a pleasant, gentlemanly lad of sixteen, with his mother's blue eyes and his father's tawny hair. His sister Alice was a slender, graceful girl, a year or two his senior, with masses of golden-brown hair, creamy-white skin and the laughing gray eyes of her Uncle Fred, and she was so frank, unaffected and friendly that both the boys took to her at once.

While the grown-ups made preparations for the picnic, the boys and Alice visited the garden and stables, looked at the horses, ponies and mules, saw John's Belgian hares and rabbits and were amused at the antics of a tame monkey which the cook had brought from St. Kitts.

The sight of the ape reminded the boys of their hunt, and soon Alice and her brother were listening to the story of Harry's adventure and were poring over the map of buried treasure.

"It *would* be bully fun looking for that island

with the yacht," cried John. "I do envy you chaps, though."

"And only to think that it may be on any of the islands, and you never can tell where you may find it," said Alice. "Why, it's just like a story in a book. I'll tell you what we'll do," she exclaimed, clapping her hands. "To-morrow we'll go around to windward and hunt over the shore there. You see, the treasure is buried on the windward side of the island, for it says: 'Anchor northeast of the beach,' and the treasure is on the same side as the beach."

"Well, of all things," cried Harry. "Alice, you're the smartest one of the whole party. We never thought of that. Of course we can see now that the treasure *is* on the east or windward side of the place. That reduces the trouble of looking for it an awful lot. Now we don't have to bother with anything but the *windward* sides of the different islands."

They were still talking it over and planning for their search the next day when Uncle Fred called out that it was time to start, and the young people hurried to the house.

Everyone was to ride horseback, for no carriage road led into the woods. The space in front of the house was filled with saddled ponies, porters with loads of food and baggage on their heads, and sev-

eral woman servants, who were to cook and serve the breakfast on the mountain.

Soon everything was ready, and mounting their horses the little cavalcade rode out through the avenue of palms, and turning into a cart road on the right, they headed toward the mountain side beyond the estate.

For some time the road ascended very gradually, following about the sloping sides of the mountains, and bordered by enormous silk-cotton trees, palms, poincianas and mimosas.

At last the party reached a little shaded glen on the mountain side where a tiny stream trickled over the mossy rocks from a crystal spring. Here all dismounted, the grooms took charge of the horses, and in a few moments the glade was transformed into a merry picnic ground. The brush was cleared away, rugs and skins spread upon the ground, hampers unpacked, and the cooks set up the tiny charcoal braziers and were soon busy at the breakfast. The "white folks" slaked their thirst with green cocoanut water, devoured luscious fruit and gazed out across the cane fields, a thousand feet below, to the sparkling Caribbean and St. Kitts across the little sapphire and emerald strait.

The young folks soon tired of sitting still, and at a suggestion from Alice started forth to explore the surrounding woods. As they passed the cooks

at work the American boys stopped to watch the preparations for the coming meal, for they had never before seen West Indian kitchen arrangements, and wondered how the native women could cook at all over the little charcoal pots. When Alice assured them that *all* cooking was done in this manner they marveled at the skill of the cooks who could prepare such splendid meals with such crude appliances.

In the afternoon games were played, jokes and stories told, and the native servants sang queer outlandish songs and played barbaric music on a big skin drum, a triangle and a rattle, and performed a weird native dance.

Later, Uncle Fred suggested a trip to the summit of the mountain; and mounting their ponies the party pushed upward by dim woodland trails, rough and precipitous paths, and finally on foot reached the pinnacle of the mountain, where, bathed in the midst of scurrying clouds, they looked forth upon the great circle of the sea beneath them.

From here the entire circumference of the little island could be clearly seen, and for a long time they gazed upon the panorama, until at last, warned by the setting sun, they descended the mountain side, mounted their ponies and made their way downward to the plantation.

The following morning the boys awoke to the roar of a torrential downpour of rain. Making their way

to the veranda, they looked out upon a dripping, sodden world of gray.

“There’s no treasure hunting to-day,” said Paul dolefully. “It’s the first rainy day we’ve had, and I think it might have held off until we’d left the island.”

“Yes,” agreed Harry, “and it looks like a long rain too. Goodness! how it does come down. The roads will be mud holes for a week after this.”

A moment later there was a rippling laugh behind them; and, turning, the boys greeted Alice as she came tripping across the veranda, dainty as a fairy in her soft white gown.

“Why, what makes you look so glum, boys?” she asked. “Anyone would think you were homesick.”

“I think it’s enough to make anyone glum to have a day like this,” replied Paul, “when we’ve only so short a time here,—to have it rain and spoil all our fun.”

“You silly boys,” Alice exclaimed, “how *can* this little shower spoil our fun? It will be as bright and pleasant as ever in half an hour, and the rain will be just splendid to lay the dust. See, it’s breaking away over yonder now.” She pointed toward distant St. Kitts.

True enough, through the gray, misty clouds and pouring rain the boys saw a brilliant patch of blue. A moment later a shaft of sunshine pierced the

clouds and sparkled on the sea and in ten minutes the world was bright with the morning sunlight.

"That's simply marvelous," exclaimed Harry. "I never would have believed such a tremendous rain could stop so soon. And look at the road! A moment ago it was a perfect lake, now it's as dry as ever."

"You're not used to the tropics yet," said Alice. "Why that was only what we call a 'Scotch mist.' You ought to see it really rain in the wet season, or in some of the other islands. Just wait until you reach Dominica or St. Vincent. I visited Dominica once with dad and it seemed to me it never stopped raining for more than ten minutes at a time, and yet between showers the roads and streets were dry and the ladies wore lace and lawn and didn't mind it a bit. Nevis is really a dry island and little showers like the one we've just had are a blessing."

The morning was spent going over the estate, looking at the cotton pickers, visiting the gins and watching the baling machines as the cotton was compressed and bound into neat bales for shipment. The boys found a field of Sisal or Yucatan hemp far more interesting than the cotton, and for a long time watched the process of separating the pulp of the leaves from the fibers. Alice told them that the Sisal was an experiment in Nevis, but that in some

of the more barren and dry islands it had proved very profitable.

A large pineapple field also attracted the party, and Paul and Harry were surprised to see the men picking pineapples that were eighteen inches long and weighed twenty or twenty-five pounds each.

"I never knew pines grew as large as that," exclaimed Paul. "All we see at home are little red or yellow things six or eight inches long, and when anyone gets a pineapple that weighs eight or ten pounds it's put on exhibition as a freak."

"These are Antiguas," explained John. "They're one of the finest kinds, but they only reach their best size and flavor under certain conditions, and as they'll not stand shipment they're seldom exported. Uncle Fred only raises them for the island markets and his own use."

"Isn't it funny that any fruit as nice as a pineapple can be so poisonous also?" mused Alice.

"I never knew pineapples *were* poisonous," exclaimed Harry. "I think you must be joking."

"Not at all; decayed pineapple is a terrible poison. One of Uncle Fred's men died last year from getting a little of the juice from a rotting pine into a cut on his finger."

"Lots of plants are poisonous under some conditions and are good to eat also," explained John. "There's Manioc or Cassava. That's the plant with

the big hand-shaped leaf over yonder. The root's thick and fleshy and is used for making starch, flour and meal, and for making tapioca. But it's deadly poison until it's properly prepared."

"That's wonderful," said Paul. "How do you prepare the root so that it's edible?"

"The people grind or grate it up, and wash it over and over again in running water in sieves. The juice is the poisonous part, and after that's all out the white meal is dried for food. Those flat, thin cakes you had with coffee this morning were made of it."

The little party had now passed the pineapple fields, and waited in the shade of a large tree for the grown people, who were some distance behind them. Looking up, Paul caught sight of the bright yellow fruit among the leaves above him.

"What kind of fruit do you call these?" he asked, pulling down a branch within reach. "They look like pears with a big lima bean growing on the end."

"Those are cashews," replied John. "You probably wouldn't like them at first, they're sort of puckery, but after a time you grow very fond of them."

"And they're still another of our poisonous edible products," laughed Alice. "If you should eat one of those nuts on the fruit it would burn your mouth

like acid and might kill you; but after they're roasted they're splendid. A great many of them are shipped to New York every year; didn't you ever eat any of them at home?"

"Come to think of it, I believe we have," said Harry. "I remember we *do* have cashew nuts, as they're called; but those *we* get are little white salted things like peanuts."

As they passed through the garden Alice stopped to gather a great bouquet of beautiful lilies.

"Look out!" cried Harry, "you'll get stung. Just look at all those bees."

She laughed, and seizing a couple of the insects in her hands held them out to Harry, saying, "Don't you want to look closer at them? You see, bees don't sting their friends here."

"No, thanks," said Harry, drawing back. "They might think me an enemy. But, say, *do* tell me how you hold them without getting stung, Alice?"

John laughed, and caught two or three more of the bees and calmly placed them between his lips, where he held them as they buzzed angrily and tried to escape.

"I believe you've got those creatures hypnotized," cried Paul. "What's all the joke, anyway?" he asked, as Uncle Fred and Mr. Andrews began laughing.

"Nothing, my boy," answered Mr. Andrews, "ex-

cept that those are stingless bees and can't sting if they want to."

"Well, we were 'stung' by them at all events," said Harry.

At breakfast the young people told of their plans to make a trip to the windward side of the island to look for the place shown on Harry's treasure map.

"Very well," said Mr. Andrews, "go along, if you wish. You'll have a jolly time. The boys will have a chance to see a lot of the island, but I don't believe you'll find your treasure on Nevis."

"We really don't expect to," said Harry, "but, you see, as long as we know it's on the windward side of *some* island we're bound to look on every one we visit. Why *don't* you think it's on Nevis, Mr. Andrews?"

"I'm not going to spoil all your fun by telling, Harry. But after you come back I'll give you my reasons. Run along and enjoy yourselves. We grown people are going visiting to-day, and you wouldn't enjoy that anyway. Stop at all the interesting places, Alice, and don't let the boys come home until they've seen all there is to see of old Nevis."

In a few minutes the groom brought around the ponies, and, waving good-by, the four youngsters cantered off down the road. John suggested that as

they were halfway around the island from the town already, they might just as well continue to the south and return through Charlestown, thus completing the circuit of the island.

As soon as they passed the southern point of Nevis, everyone kept a sharp lookout for landmarks that resembled the map.

"It must be some distance from the mountain, if it really *is* on a mountainous island," remarked Paul, "for the map doesn't show any mountain at all; but just a point of land with a ridge and cliff on it. The most prominent marks to look for are these little islands off the southwest shore and the mangrove swamp."

"I know where there are some islands like that," cried Alice. "I remember seeing them one time when we were around to windward with the Berkeleys; but they're little bits of things—hardly more than rocks with cactus on them."

"The map doesn't say how big they are," remarked John. "For all we know they may be only a few feet square. Too bad the old pirate forgot to put a 'scale of miles' on his map the way they do in geographies."

Presently the party reached the windward side of the island, and Paul and Harry were surprised at the difference in the temperature and sea from that on the other coast. Here the shores were exposed to

the full sweep of the trade winds blowing across the broad Atlantic. The sea was bright with white-capped waves as far as eye could see, and the rollers broke in a smother of foamy surf along the shore. In many spots the coast was rocky, rough, and broken, and the waves had worn queer caves and holes in the rocks.

"My, but this *is* glorious!" cried Harry, as the party stopped close to the shore, the breeze whipping about them, and the salt spray tingling in their nostrils. "Is it always like this over on this side of the islands?"

"Not always," said John. "Sometimes it's very calm; but usually it blows hard, and there's always a long swell. That's the reason nearly all the estates and towns are on the leeward side of the islands. It's impossible to land boats on this side for days at a time."

"They say that 'straws show which way the wind blows,' " Alice remarked, "but you see down here we need trees to tell us," and she pointed to the cocoanuts and sea-grapes growing along the shore.

"That's right, too," laughed Harry. "All those trees are bent over toward the land. Just see those funny palms! Why, some of them are lying flat on the ground with just the top standing up."

"And there's one that's a regular letter 'S,' " exclaimed Paul. "I suppose the trees try to grow

straight and the wind keeps pushing against them as they grow and that's why they all look so queer."

"Yes, that's it," replied John, "and if a gale or hurricane comes along they get broken or upset and afterward keep right on growing. You see a coconut palm has very small roots, and as they usually grow close to the sea, in the sand, they capsize very easily; but they're hard to kill and will grow even when constantly covered with salt water and spray."

At last Alice pointed to a little cove, or bay, and said that here were the islands she had mentioned.

They found the bay was protected from the seas by a jutting rocky point, and that close to the shore of this point were several small islets, just as Alice had described. The largest was perhaps a hundred feet in length, and the boys, comparing them with the maps, grew quite excited, for there were the same number in the little cove as shown on the map, and they were arranged in the same way.

"Yes, and there's the mangroves, too!" cried John. "See, right in that little niche on the inner side of the point. I really believe this *is* the spot. Let's hitch the ponies and walk out and look over the place."

This was at once done; and, pushing through the thick brush and woods of the cape and scrambling

over the rocks, the excited boys and girl reached the eastern coast of the promontory.

As they came out of the brush and looked down at the shore, they uttered cries of disappointment.

"Oh, pshaw!" exclaimed Harry. "This isn't the place, after all. There's no sand beach and no coconut palms; just a rough, rocky shore."

"Perhaps that's all been changed since the pirates hid the chest," said Paul. "We might as well go out to the end, and see if we can find the cliff and the caves."

The party again pushed through the brush; but though they hunted high and low they could find no signs of either the cliff or caves, and at last gave up in despair and retraced their way to the ponies.

They were considerably disappointed, and rode along for some time in silence.

"I wonder why father said he didn't think the treasure was on Nevis?" mused John. "I don't see why it isn't as likely to be one place as another."

"I'm going to tease him into telling us as soon as we get home," said Alice.

"At any rate, every place we find which is not the right one makes one less to search," remarked Harry. "And we know this *isn't* the right one, anyway."

There was no other likely spot along the coast and Alice and the boys soon recovered from their disap-

pointment, and gave themselves up to the enjoyment of the ride and the scenery.

In due time they reached the northern end of the island, came in sight of St. Kitts across the strait, and presently reached the first outlying buildings of the town.

They visited the old church and saw Lord Nelson's signature on the marriage registry; made a trip to Hamilton's birthplace, and hired a boatman to take them to see the submerged city.

The boys found this immensely interesting. Looking down through the clear water, they could see the coral-encrusted outlines of old walls and buildings about which the bright-hued fishes flashed like submarine butterflies.

Returning to the town, they stopped to rest and lunch at the home of a friend of the Andrews, afterward visiting the sulphur springs and rambling through the ruins of the once-fashionable and world-famous "Bath-house." Late in the afternoon, having seen everything of interest in the town and its vicinity, they mounted their ponies and arrived home in time for a bath and change before dinner.

"Did you find your treasure?" laughingly asked Mr. Andrews, as the party cantered up to the steps.

"No, sir," replied Harry; "but we had a lot of fun, and saw everything."

“Oh, dad, please tell us why you thought the treasure wasn’t buried in Nevis!” asked Alice.

“All right,” chuckled her father. “You see, Nevis is a volcanic island, and the map shows a spot of limestone formation. It says ‘coral cliff.’ ”

“You dear old humbug!” laughed Alice.

“Well, we *are* chumps!” exclaimed Harry.

CHAPTER X

PETE'S PRIZE

MR. ANDREWS was to return to St. Kitts with Mr. Rogers and the two boys on the following day, leaving Mrs. Andrews with her children at Nevis. The boys were really sad at thinking of leaving their new friends, and a lump rose in their throats as the *Cormorant* headed across the strait and the flag was dipped in farewell salute to the little party waving good-by on the Charlestown dock.

Upon arriving in Basseterre, Mr. Andrews at once sent the carriage with the groom for Pete, and early in the afternoon he returned with the black boy. Paul and Harry hardly recognized Pete, who was neatly clothed in a new suit, wore a felt hat on his woolly head, and walked stiffly and awkwardly in a pair of canvas shoes.

At dawn the next morning the party bade good-by to Mr. Andrews, and, boarding the yacht, set their sails to the morning breeze, heading for Montserrat. As they sat at the cabin table eating breakfast, and St. Kitt's hills grew hazy and purple in the distance, Paul said: "I've always heard of Southern hospi-

tality; but I never thought anyone could be as hospitable and nice as the Andrews."

"They're like many West Indians, my boy," replied his father. "Of course, the fact that Will and I were old friends made our welcome greater; but even utter strangers are received with open arms and made to feel quite at home by the old West Indian families."

"Isn't it funny how well the white and colored people get on together down here!" said Harry. "There doesn't seem to be any 'color-line,' as we call it. Why, yesterday Alice took us to the home of the nicest old colored woman in Charlestown. She was just as well educated, as polite and ladylike as any white person I ever met; and Alice treated her just as she would a white person. Imagine one of our Northern girls visiting a colored woman and taking tea with her when she had visitors along."

Mr. Rogers was thoughtful for a moment; then he said: "You are right, Harry; there *is* no color line. Sometimes I think it's the greatest curse of the islands that there isn't. It's all right theoretically, and I've many good and respected friends among the colored people and negroes; but it's tragic sometimes. I don't know whether I ought to speak of it; I hadn't intended to; but I must warn you boys not to inquire too closely as to who's white and who colored down here. It's easy to give unin-

tentional offense, even if they don't feel about it as we do in the North. Even Alice's grandmother Andrews was a quadroon."

A few miles from the *Cormorant* the rugged, isolated, barren island of Redonda reared its bald head above the sea, and Mr. Rogers explained that on this desert rock a white man and a number of negroes lived. The rock was rich in guano, he said, and the material was mined and lowered in baskets to the boats. "Everything that's brought to or from Redonda," he went on, "must be raised or lowered in the same way, and even visitors land on Redonda in baskets. It must be one of the most God-forsaken and desolate spots in the world to live on."

Montserrat was now plainly visible, and soon the boys could make out details of the coast through their glasses. The northern end of the island appeared desolate and barren, consisting of bold rocky headlands covered with a sparse, yellow growth of stunted trees, grass, and immense cacti. Nearer the center of the island, however, the hills rose, rich with verdure, with a bulky mass of lofty mountains towering above all.

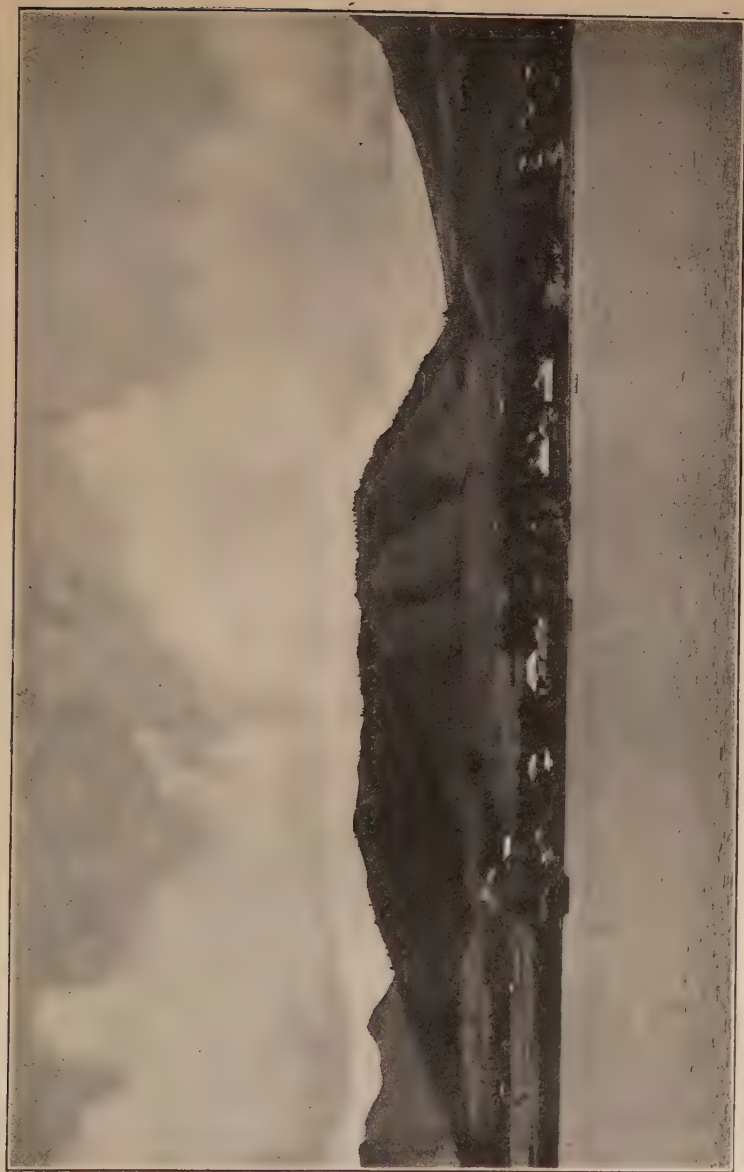
Soon the yacht rounded the northern headlands and sailed along the leeward shore. From the creaming foam along the beach, broad green cane fields swept back to the mountain slopes, each square

field sharply outlined by rows of palms. In the middle foreground a great square-topped cone rose from the plains, its sides covered with lime orchards and terraced with gardens, while to right and left rose two huge bowl-shaped craters, their scarred and battered sides softened with a robe of deepest green. Between the craters and the central hill a white ribbon of road led up the gentle sloping valley, and at its shoreward end nestled the little town, its walls washed by the sea and its houses almost hidden in countless waving palms.

"Yes, Uncle Charles, I admit you were right!" cried Harry, as the *Cormorant* swung to her anchor before the dock. "Montserrat is like Nevis and St. Kitts and St. Thomas and Santa Cruz all combined. It's like an island cut out of green plush."

Numerous shore boats had now gathered about the *Cormorant*; and while they held off waiting for the arrival of the customs boat yet their occupants kept up an incessant clamor. The boys had been so intent on looking at the island that they had paid little heed to the boatmen, but at last the racket compelled their attention.

As soon as the men saw them looking, they commenced yelling and chattering with redoubled vigor, and one strapping mulatto called out: "Me fo' yo', Marsters; sure an' ye'll be wantin' some fine oranges from me here."



A great square-topped cone rose from the plains

"Lave him be," screamed another. "He's no manners at all. It's me has the fine fruit, Marsters."

"Sure an' ye're such pretty young marsters," cried a buxom negress. "I beg yo' a penny, Sahs."

Harry and Paul looked at each other in amazement. "Are we in old Erin or the West Indies?" exclaimed Paul. "Just hear the brogue on those darkies' tongues."

"And look, there, in that blue boat," cried his cousin. "I do believe that negro has red hair!"

"Certainly he has," laughed Mr. Rogers, who had approached and had overheard the last remark. "It's not uncommon in Montserrat. That and the brogue come from the 'Wild Irish' who settled the island years ago. You'll see plenty of other evidences of the Emerald Isle after you land."

When the customs boat had departed the launch was lowered, and the two boys and Mr. Rogers landed at the little dock.

They were greeted by a ragged, grinning, good-natured crowd, whose quaint brogue and Blarney tickled the two boys immensely. The natives soon found that the visitors would not require the services of guides, and left the party in peace, amusing themselves chaffing the sailor Tom, or lounged about engaged in the pleasant occupation of doing absolutely nothing.

On either side of the dock great stone walls, extensive stone buildings, and once-beautiful houses testified to the former prosperity of the island; but all looked very dilapidated now, and many of the walls were absolutely in ruins.

Entering the main street, the boys found it well paved and neat, and Mr. Rogers remarked that Plymouth had certainly improved a great deal since his last visit. A few yards beyond the dock was a commodious open market surrounded by a neat stone wall and provided with a large wooden shed under which the market women displayed their wares. Over the door of a near-by store the boys read the name, "Patrick Donahue." Patrick was a coal-black negro. Wherever they wandered about the town, Celtic names were in evidence, while every girl and woman they met curtsied and "begged fo' a penny," accompanying their requests with a deal of true Irish Blarney.

"I've often thought the old settlers must have brought over a chip of the Blarney Stone when they came," laughed Mr. Rogers, "and that everyone here must have kissed it."

The sights of the town were soon exhausted, and as the boys wanted to take a drive into the country a boy was accordingly dispatched for a horse and carriage. While they waited, Mr. Rogers related a story of an Irishman who came out to the islands



Beyond the dock was an open market



All looked dilapidated and many of the walls were in ruins

intending to settle. "As he heard the brogue of the boatmen about the steamer when he reached Montserrat he was greatly impressed," said Mr. Rogers. "Calling out to one man, he asked how long he had lived here. 'Three years,' responded the negro, who had come from St. Kitts. 'Three years!' cried the Irishman. 'An' as black as that already! Sure, 'tis no place for me at all, at all!' and he returned on the same ship without even going ashore."

The carriage now arrived, and, much to the boys' delight, the driver's head was covered with a red mop of wool that any Irishman would have envied. Much to their disappointment, however, the driver spoke with scarcely a hint of a brogue, although upon inquiry they found his name to be James Sullivan.

As they were returning to the town Mr. Rogers caught sight of a large and really magnificent garden within a well-built stone wall and with the roof of a large house peeping from among the foliage.

"Who owns that fine garden, James?" he inquired.

"It belong to Mr. Irish, Sah," replied the driver.

"Ah, a native gentleman, I suppose."

"No, Sah," came the unexpected reply. "He a' English gentleman, Sah."

Both the boys roared with laughter, in which Mr. Rogers joined.

“That certainly *is* the limit,” said Harry when he regained his breath. “Imagine, an Englishman named Irish on this island of all places.”

There seemed to be nothing more of interest in Montserrat; and, returning to the yacht, the party bade farewell to the old Irish West Indian island and headed to the eastward and Antigua.

As they passed out of the roadstead, Mr. Rogers said: “Have you boys lost interest in your treasure? I noticed that you didn’t search on Montserrat.”

Harry laughed. “No, Uncle Charles, we haven’t lost any interest. But Montserrat’s a volcanic island, and we’re going to search only coral islands in future.”

“That plan will save a great deal of time and trouble,” replied his uncle. “But Mr. Andrews overlooked one thing when he jollied you at Nevis. Many of the true volcanic islands *do* have coral cliffs and limestone caves.”

“Why! How can volcanic islands have coral rock on them?” exclaimed Paul. “I thought they were made of lava.”

“So they are,” said his father; “but a great many of these volcanic mountains have risen and fallen for several hundred feet since they were first formed, and wherever corals have grown upon the rocks during a period of submersion they’ve been

subsequently raised far above the sea when the islands again rose upward. Such formations are known as 'elevated reefs,' and in many places fossil corals, seashells and great reefs may be found hundreds of feet above the sea level. You saw the submerged city in Nevis; you can imagine that if the island were suddenly to rise a hundred feet or so that the now-sunken town would be far above the sea, with all its covering of coral and marine growths intact."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Harry. "If I'd known that, I wouldn't have left Montserrat without a search."

"You needn't worry," laughed his uncle. "There's no spot that corresponds to your map on the east coast of Montserrat. If there had been any likelihood of the treasure being hidden there, I would have spoken about it at the time. Personally, I haven't the least doubt that your pirates' map refers to a true coral or limestone island; but it may be some small key in the Bahamas or even in Bermuda; so don't be disappointed if you never find it. These tropical seas are full of islands and keys."

"I'm going to look at every place we stop," insisted Harry. "Is Antigua a volcanic island?"

"No; Antigua is of limestone or coral formation, and is very low and flat compared to the islands we've seen. It's very highly cultivated and is more like a great private estate than a natural island. I

hardly think there's any likelihood of your treasure being there, for I never heard of it being frequented by pirates. However, in order to put your minds at rest, we'll drive along the eastern coast and can readily find out if there's any spot that resembles your map."

At this moment Pete came running to the after-deck. "Oh, sah," he exclaimed excitedly, "tha big turtle yonder, he fars asleep, sah! Please to le' me cotch he, sah."

Mr. Rogers and the boys rose and looked in the direction Pete indicated. At first they could see nothing; but presently they discerned a broad rounded object on the surface of the water which looked, as Harry put it, "like a boat bottom up."

"Is that a turtle?" exclaimed Paul. "He must be a whopper!"

Pete was dancing up and down, constantly exclaiming: "Le' me cotch he, sah!"

Mr. Rogers laughed. "How in the world do you think you can catch the creature, Pete? Long before we reached him he'd wake up and dive. These sea turtles are very wary."

"Yassar; me know, sah; but me cotch he, sah."

"Very well; go ahead and give your orders to the helmsman and let's see how you catch the turtle, Pete."

Pete fairly beamed with pleasure; and, telling

Tom to luff up in the wind, he commenced rapidly to pull off his clothes. By the time the *Cormorant* had lost her headway, he was stripped, and with a coil of small rope in his teeth, he slipped silently into the water, with final instructions to run alongside and pick up the turtle when he called out.

With long, easy, silent strokes, Pete struck out directly toward the sleeping turtle, every few moments raising his body and head out of the water and glancing ahead to be sure of his direction. In a few minutes he was within a dozen yards of the unsuspecting creature, and the watchers on the yacht saw him cease the motions of his hands, and while propelling himself steadily with feet alone he began uncoiling the rope. A moment later he disappeared from sight, and Harry exclaimed: "I believe he's going to dive under the turtle!"

The words were hardly uttered when Pete's black head bobbed up beside the turtle. There was a tremendous thrashing of the water, and, like a slim brown monkey, Pete scrambled onto the turtle's back, calling lustily to the yacht, and hauling with all his strength at the rope in his hands.

It took but a few moments for the *Cormorant* to gather headway and reach Pete and his queer steed, and as the yacht rounded to beside him, he called to Jack to catch the line and make it fast. As this was done, the boy slipped from the turtle's back, while

the latter thrashed about, securely held by the rope around his neck. Grasping another stouter rope, Pete plunged again into the sea, dove beneath the struggling creature, and, with a few quick motions, made the line fast around the turtle's flippers. Fastening the end of this rope to a halliard, all hands tailed on, and with a "heave-ho" from Jack the turtle was swung slowly from the water and landed upside down on deck.

"You're certainly a wonder, Pete," exclaimed Mr. Rogers as they gathered about the immense turtle, while Pete calmly commenced to dress. "I've heard of the Kanakas riding turtles, but I never expected to see it done."

"Just think of diving under that beast, slipping a noose around his neck and scrambling onto his back," cried Paul. "I should think the turtle would have carried him straight under water."

"That's the secret of the trick," answered his father. "As long as the turtle's head is held up and back he cannot dive or swim; but it requires an expert swimmer and mighty quick work to capture a turtle in that manner."

"We'll dine on turtle soup, at any rate," remarked Harry. "My, but isn't he a monster!"

"Fully three hundred pounds, I should say," replied Mr. Rogers. "There's far more meat here than we can possibly use. We'll keep the beast

until we arrive at Antigua, where we'll sell him for Pete's benefit, reserving only what meat we can use ourselves."

Antigua could now be seen in the distance; but the breeze was light, and in order to reach the island before dark the motor was started; but it was late in the afternoon before those on the *Cormorant* sighted the lighthouse off the harbor of St. Johns. An hour later the motor was stopped and the yacht rested motionless, waiting for a trim little pilot boat that came dancing over the waves toward her.

The boys found Antigua very different in appearance from the other islands, as Mr. Rogers had stated. The low rounded hills were dull green and looked parched and barren; but the little town on the hill at the head of the harbor, the white buildings on the islets in the bay, and the broad green cane fields made a pretty picture.

Soon after the *Cormorant* entered the harbor, they passed a beautiful little islet covered with well-cultivated gardens, waving palms, and crowned with a rambling white building.

The boys inquired what the place was and were told by the pilot that this was the leper hospital, and was known as Rat Island.

Looking with greater interest at the spot, the boys saw numerous people sitting and walking about,

many of whom waved their hands or hats as the yacht passed.

"Are all those poor people lepers?" asked Harry.

"Yes," replied Mr. Rogers. "Leprosy is all too common in the islands. Here in Antigua they are isolated and kept virtual prisoners on this islet, which was formerly a fort. But on many of the other islands those afflicted wander about at will. Luckily, whites are seldom affected, and nearly all the cases of leprosy are found among the lowest classes of negroes."

"Why, I thought leprosy was horribly contagious!" cried Paul. "If the lepers are walking about the streets, I should think everyone would catch the disease."

"I think a great deal of our dread of the disease is without foundation," replied his father. "I doubt if it is half as contagious as we've been led to believe, and many scientific men now claim that it's only transmitted by fleas and other vermin, just as yellow fever and malaria are transmitted by certain mosquitoes."

The *Cormorant* was now close to the town, the motor was stopped, and the yacht came to anchor a few rods from the landing place just as the sun dipped beneath the horizon.

Pete now announced that dinner was ready, and

Mr. Rogers suggested that they eat first and go ashore later.

The meal over, the party landed and wandered along the wide, well-paved main street that led from the wharves up the hill. Numerous electric lights were placed along the streets, the stores seemed large and prosperous, and people afoot, in carriages, on horseback, and on bicycles were everywhere.

"Why, this seems quite a little metropolis!" remarked Harry. "I haven't seen so many people on any of the other islands. I declare, they even have a fire department!" he cried, pointing to a building across the street, through the open door of which could be seen a hose cart gleaming in all its glory of scarlet paint and polished brass.

"And automobiles!" exclaimed Paul, as a little runabout swung around a corner, its horn tooting at the pedestrians.

"And even motorcycles," laughed Mr. Rogers, indicating a stalwart negro who leaned against an "Indian" and conversed with a coquettish mulatto girl.

"Well, they're certainly up to date!" remarked Harry. "I never expected to see so many modern improvements down here. But I must admit I like the islands better without such things."

A little farther up the road they passed a rather handsome stone building, which Mr. Rogers in-

formed them was the courthouse. They turned into a side road, passed the Governor's residence in its beautiful grounds, and seated themselves on benches in the shade of some handsome trees forming an avenue along the sides of the smooth, straight road.

"These are mahogany trees," remarked Mr. Rogers. "You'll be able to get a better idea of them by daylight to-morrow. That field yonder is the parade ground, cricket field, and football field. St. Johns is the capital, not only of Antigua but of the Leeward Islands as well; and, although the island is not actually paying expenses, yet there are so many British officials here, and so many well-to-do people, that it is quite progressive, as you've seen. To-morrow we'll visit the old church, dispose of Pete's turtle, take a long drive in the country, and see everything of interest."

For some time they sat beneath the mahogany trees, enjoying the soft night air, listening to the music from the governor's grounds, and marveling at the brilliant light of the half moon that rode through the star-lit heavens.

At last they returned to the yacht and slept soundly until aroused by the noise and bustle on the quay near them.

As the party approached a narrow cross street they were greeted with the sound of excited voices and reaching the corner witnessed a lively alterca-

tion between a couple of teamsters. One was a mulatto, driving a dray loaded with barrels of sugar bound for the docks; the other a negro with a load of lumber headed up the hill. They had evidently met in this narrow thoroughfare, and with no room to pass each was insisting that the other must give way and return whence he had come.

“Yo’ merely expandulatin’ buncomb, yo’ wo’tless yaller specimen of misguided humanity yo’,” cried the negro. “Fo’ wherefo’ yo’ have the audacity to let yo’ imagination direc’ yo’ to tha’ assumption that I’s e gon to circumnavigate an’ discommode ma dignification. Ah’s e a British citizen an’ a free-bo’n subjec’ of His Majesty King Jawge, God bless him.”

“Who yo’ addressin’ in that hifalutin’, presumptuous, supercil’ous methodiction, yo’ insignif’cant ebony-colored African, yo’?” demanded the mulatto, shaking his great brown fist. “Ah desire yo’ to distinc’ly and defini’ly absorbin’ate tha’ eminently interestin’ an’ impo’tant info’mation Ahs propoundin’ an’ if yo’ decline to precipitately reconsider tha’ sentiments yo’ jus’ expressed an’ at once an’ immediately turn yo’ team about an’ retrace yo’ circuitous route Ah’ll——”

What the awful penalty would be was never disclosed, for at this moment a policeman appeared on

the scene and as the boys passed on Paul, between fits of laughter, exclaimed:

"I'll take it all back, Father. That certainly beats our friend in St. Thomas. O dear! that was rich, 'expandulatin' and 'methodiction' are certainly good."

"Yes, and 'absorbinate' and 'dignification' too," laughed Harry. "Where in the world *do* these people get such words?"

"To use a slang expression," replied Mr. Rogers, 'you'll have to search me.' The rascals are parrot-like in their ability to pick up any new word or expression that strikes their fancy. Any new slang or peculiar phrase pleases them immensely and they take particular delight in using their vocabulary when excited or quarreling. Possibly they consider such words as more forcible than cursing. But here we are at the hotel."

The proprietor of the Globe Hotel was very glad indeed to buy Pete's turtle; and, after a little haggling, he agreed to pay twopence a pound, live weight, and to deliver ten pounds of the best meat to Rami as well.

As Mr. Rogers had already directed Rami to see the turtle weighed and had insisted upon the hotel keeper signing a statement of the agreement, he had no fear of the fellow cheating in his absence; so he

directed him to send to the yacht at any time for the turtle.

"That means ten or twelve dollars for Pete, anyway," remarked Harry. "Not bad for a few minutes' fun."

"Yes, and probably more than he ever had before in his life," added Mr. Rogers.

At the summit of the little hill on which the town stands, the party passed through the ancient graveyard surrounding the church. Many of the epitaphs were very quaint and curious, and the boys spent some time deciphering the strange inscriptions on the tombstones. They then entered the church, and Paul exclaimed: "Why, that's funny! I thought this church was stone, but it's only wood, after all."

His father laughed. "I don't wonder you're surprised. The church is stone, but during the severe earthquakes to which Antigua is subject a great many of the stones were shaken down. To guard against accident, the entire church has been lined with wood, so that it is in effect a wooden church within a stone one."

The party then climbed up the narrow, winding stairs to the belfry in the tower, and gained a magnificent view of the town, the harbor, and the surrounding countryside.

Passing again to the street, they stopped in at the courthouse. The boys were interested in the pro-

cedure of this court, for it was very different from an American court of justice. The spectacled judge, with his enormous curled white wig, at his high desk; the odd witness box and the various attorneys in their funny pig-tailed wigs, were all very strange and foreign, and the sight of a jet-black negro solicitor, his kinky head covered with a white wig, was so comical that the boys were obliged to retire hastily for fear of laughing in court.

The party now returned to the *Cormorant* for breakfast, and found Pete strutting about as proud as a peacock, feeling himself a perfect Cræsus in the possession of three whole sovereigns.

Early in the afternoon a carriage was engaged, and the party enjoyed a long and beautiful drive over the splendid roads of the island. Cane was everywhere, and there was really little else of interest, Harry remarking that if it wasn't for the palms they might just as well be in England or the United States; "only," he added, "you'd have to imagine the cane was Indian corn."

Mr. Rogers, as he had promised, drove along the eastern shore; but nothing was seen in the least resembling the landmarks shown on the pirate map. Harry said he was not a bit surprised. "One might just as well search for pirates' treasure on Long Island or over in Jersey as on Antigua," he remarked. "The place is altogether too pokey and

proper for such things. I'll bet any pirate that ever landed here would turn away in disgust."

The party returned to the yacht late in the afternoon and thoroughly enjoyed their dinner of turtle soup, turtle eggs, and turtle meat. The evening was spent sitting on deck and as the boys went below to turn in, Mr. Rogers said: "You'll be in a new country to-morrow, boys, and we'll do our sightseeing under the tricolor of France."

CHAPTER XI

UNDER THE TRICOLOR

DAYBREAK found the *Cormorant* outside of Antigua's harbor, sailing rapidly along the coast toward Guadeloupe.

By the time breakfast was over, the low hills of Antigua were dim and hazy in the distance, and the massive bulk of Guadeloupe loomed huge and impressive above the sea, its lofty mountaintops hidden in masses of clouds.

"Well, that's *some* island!" remarked Paul, as the boys gazed at the mountains through their glasses.

"It looks like the tip end of a continent, more than an island," said Harry. "I don't see how there can be such mountains on such small spots of land. How high are those peaks, Uncle Charles?"

"About a mile," replied his uncle. "Soufriere is the highest peak, but there are several others nearly as lofty. The portion you now see is Guadeloupe proper. It is a volcanic and very mountainous island. The eastern half of it is known as Grand Terre, and is low, flat and of coral formation. The two portions of the island are separated by a shal-

low, narrow strait known as 'Salt River,' for Guadeloupe is really two distinct islands. The islands are very fertile, and fully one-half the area is under cultivation."

Just before midday, the *Cormorant* passed the western end of the island and close to the small islets which, Mr. Rogers informed the boys, were known as "The Saints."

The boys gazed with wonder at the verdure-clad mountains on every side. "Why, it's like sailing through the Rocky Mountains," said Harry; "only there are no bare rocks or cliffs here, and no snow-covered peaks! My, but isn't everything rich and green!"

"I don't wonder father called St. Thomas just hilly," added Paul. "I said the same thing when we saw St. Kitts; but this beats all the others put together. I wonder what that growth on the mountains is like. It looks so soft and velvety."

"You'd find it far from 'velvety,' Paul," said Mr. Rogers. "That growth is principally enormous forest trees. They're so thick that you see only their tops, but they're really far larger than the 'high woods' where we hunted the monkeys in St. Kitts."

"I'd love to climb that big Soufriere mountain," said Harry. "It must be wonderful in the forest, judging by what we saw in Nevis and St. Kitts."

"I'm sorry we won't have a chance, Harry," said

his uncle. "We have many places to visit yet, and it would require several days to make a trip through those forests to the top of the volcano and return. I expect to stop here only long enough to let you see the town and the immediate vicinity."

"Is Soufriere a volcano?" asked Paul. "It doesn't look like one."

"Yes; it's not only a volcano, but an active one at that. At the time of the Martinique eruption the inhabitants of Guadeloupe were in great fear of a similar catastrophe, but Soufriere merely smoked and steamed a little more than usual. In patois-French, 'Soufriere' means a place where there's sulphur, and many of the islands have their 'Soufrieres.' Guadeloupe, Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent all have mountains or villages of the name; and in nearly every case there's an active volcano in the vicinity. But, see, there in that little bay where the ship is at anchor, is the town of Basse Terre."

The boys saw a pretty little town nestled among the hills at the head of a bay, and watched it through their glasses until it was hidden by a headland.

"I thought we were going to land here," exclaimed Paul.

"So we are," said Mr. Rogers, "but not at Basse Terre. There's much more of interest at Point-à-Pitre."

A few miles beyond Basse Terre the boys sighted a lighthouse and some buildings on a small island, and a few moments later sails were lowered, the motor was started, and the *Cormorant* was headed toward a cleft in the shore. When about a mile from the land, a small sailboat was seen approaching. A few minutes later she came alongside, and a native pilot jumped on the yacht's deck.

He was a quick, active, yellow-skinned man, with straight hair. He spoke English with an odd French accent, and was altogether different from the natives that the boys had seen at the other islands.

Under his guidance, the *Cormorant* rapidly approached the harbor's entrance, and presently the boys saw the numerous buildings, church towers, and masts of ships ahead.

As the yacht entered the channel to the harbor, they realized the necessity of a pilot, for on either hand were rocky shores, between which the channel turned and twisted, and in many places the jagged reefs and ledges could be seen through the water on every side.

The *Cormorant* passed safely through, however, and at last entered the broad and quiet harbor. The boys were really amazed at the busy scene before them, for they came to anchor in the midst of a fleet of steamers, schooners, and square-riggers from every corner of the world, while fussy little tugs,

steam-lighters, sailboats and rowboats were everywhere. Instead of the little quaint and rambling towns to which they had become accustomed, Paul and Harry looked shoreward upon a large and well-built city with splendid stone docks and piers, steam derricks and a constant procession of carts and drays, while in the slips great steamers were loading and discharging cargoes and over all floated the tri-colored banner of France from countless flag poles.

"Well, this is a bustling place," cried Paul. "Here comes the revenue boat," he added, as a little steam launch came alongside the yacht.

The officials were white, thoroughly French in appearance and manners and took their leave with many bows after merely glancing at the *Cormorant's* papers. As the time for their visit was brief, the boys lost no time in going ashore and soon landed at the stone stairs of the dock, where countless bright-colored foreign-looking boats crowded and jostled, their occupants keeping up an incessant babel of Creole French.

The little party had hardly proceeded a dozen paces from the dock when Paul stopped short and in amazement exclaimed: "Hello! There's old Rami! How in the world did he get ashore?" He pointed to a man leisurely walking up the farther side of the street. He was tall and thin, with slender legs,



A small sailboat was seen approaching



Bright-colored, foreign-looking boats crowded about

dressed in white, with an enormous turban on his head.

“Why, sure enough!” cried Harry. “I didn’t know he was coming ashore.”

Mr. Rogers laughed. “That’s not Rami,” he said, “although I admit the fellow is enough like our cook to be his twin brother. He’s merely a coolie. There are numbers of them here on Guadeloupe. See, there are several more.”

The party had now entered one of the narrow, busy streets, and were picking their way through crowds of negroes, mulattoes, Hindus, and Frenchmen, and between drays, carts, and barrows, until they reached a wider and less noisy thoroughfare. The street led to a large open plaza with a massive cathedral on the farther side; and here the boys and Mr. Rogers stopped to rest on a bench under a tree.

“Oh, look at that funny woman!” exclaimed Harry. “Isn’t she foreign-looking!”

The woman was approaching from the opposite side of the square, and was striking enough to attract anybody’s attention. Barefooted and clothed in some filmy white material swathed around and around her body, she seemed to float rather than walk over the ground. On her sleek black hair was balanced a basket of fruit, a gauzy veil flung over her shoulder half concealed her copper-brown face, while her bare ankles and arms were loaded with

bracelets, chains, and bangles of dull silver and gold.

"Why, she's got a ring in her nose!" cried Paul, as she drew close.

"And a bunch of gold fastened to one side of her nose also," added Harry.

"She's a coolie woman," explained Mr. Rogers. "The large gold hoop in her nose is her engagement ring, the little boss on the side indicates that she's married, and all the silver and gold ornaments are the family savings. All the money the coolies save is worked up by Hindu silversmiths into jewelry, and the women are really walking bank accounts for their husbands."

Mr. Rogers and the boys now walked through the narrow streets toward the market, stopping frequently to gaze at the bright-colored wooden houses with projecting balconies and windows and intricate latticework, and peeking into half-open gateways at spacious courtyards gorgeous with tropical flowers. Nearly all the people they met were mulattoes or quadroons, and pure negroes were much less in evidence than on the other islands they had visited. The sunlight was very intense, and the white streets glared and scintillated with the heat. Many of the people carried great white or green umbrellas, and everyone seemed vivacious, polite, and extremely "Frenchy," as Paul called it.

They found the market very large, occupying an

entire block, and surrounded by spreading shade trees, and provided with an extensive iron roof. It was too late in the day for the market to be crowded, but the boys found much to interest them. The native women in their trailing, stiffly starched gowns of blazing colors, their lace-covered and embroidered chemises, brilliant-hued neckerchiefs, saucy little Madras turbans, loads of jewelry, and enormous earrings, were very different from the shirt-waisted, calico-gowned and unkempt women of Montserrat and Antigua. In the attractive native costumes the women appeared as of a different race, and gave a vivid local color to the place. The picturesque costumes, glaring sunshine, stifling heat, soft-eyed Orientals, and chatter of French made the whole scene very foreign. The boys could scarcely believe they were still in the West Indies or even in America.

As they made their way to the docks and stepped into the launch, Harry said: "Well, Uncle Charles, I've seen more strange things here than in all the other islands. But isn't it hot!"

"Yes; Guadeloupe is one of the hottest places in the West Indies. The town is shut in and cut off from the trade-winds; but back on the hills there are many fine country places where it's cool and healthy."

The air was so much cooler on the yacht than on

shore that the boys were glad to spend the late afternoon and evening under the awning.

Rami asked for shore leave, which was granted. Mr. Rogers also told the two sailors they could spend the evening on land if they wished. Pete accompanied Rami, to whom he had taken a great liking, and Mr. Rogers and the two boys were left alone on the yawl.

"I wonder if our treasure is buried on Guadeloupe," mused Harry, after a long silence.

"Hardly," said his uncle. "This island has been in the possession of the French since the earliest settlement, and no British pirate in his senses would bury his treasure on a French island. Anyway, it would take weeks to search the eastern coast of the place; and, as I remember it, there is little or no coral rock on the windward side, and no spot that in the least resembles your map."

"The French appear to have much better success with their colonies than the English," remarked Paul. "None of the British islands seemed as busy and prosperous as this."

"Yes, for some reason or other the French islands are all well-to-do. Martinique was even busier and more thriving than Guadeloupe, before the eruption; whereas the English islands, with the same natural advantages, and more, are usually heavily in debt and very backward."

“What time do you expect to leave here, father?” asked Paul.

“Some time during the forenoon. I ordered a supply of gasoline to-day, and that will come aboard the first thing in the morning. Then I’d like to take you boys for a little tour around the lagoon. We’ll get away in time to make Dominica before sunset to-morrow.”

About ten o’clock Rami and Pete arrived in a shore boat, and the cook approached the boys and handed each of them a little East Indian sandalwood box. When the boxes were opened they were found to contain a number of quaint silver rings, bracelets, and anklets, and among them a little nose ornament of gold filagree work set with dull-red garnets and rough turquoise.

“Why, Rami,” exclaimed Harry, as he lifted out and examined the curious pieces of jewelry. “I can’t thank you enough for these things. How in the world did you guess we longed to have some of the Hindu work?”

Rami smiled and replied with a salaam: “Me hear the Sahibs speak at tha dinnar. The Sahibs say how they see mooch pretty coolie womans an’ she hab mooch ring an’ jewel. Each one coolie know Rami, Sar, an’ mooch please to give pres-ent to young Sahib, Sar.”

The following morning, the gasoline having been

put on board, the party entered the launch and went for a cruise about the shores of the extensive lagoon connected with the harbor.

The water was shallow and the bottom, with its growth of brilliant sponges, sea fans, and delicately colored corals, was plainly visible. Schools of bright-colored fishes darted here and there among the marine growths; and the boys succeeded in catching a good mess of fish, while enjoying the strange sensation of actually watching the fish nibble and bite the hooks lowered from the side of the launch. In some places the lagoon was bordered with swamps of mangrove trees, and on their queer, sprawling, aërial roots were clusters of good-sized oysters. These could be reached from the boat; and it was a novel experience to pick oysters from trees. A refreshing bath in a sheltered, sandy cove finished the morning's fun, and the party returned to the yacht. Soon after, they hoisted anchor, and with a native pilot at the wheel, passed out of the tortuous channel, and dropping the pilot outside the harbor entrance, set sail for Dominica, thirty miles distant.

As the yacht passed the southern end of Guadeloupe, Harry exclaimed: "How close Dominica looks! I thought 'twas thirty or forty miles away."

"That's not Dominica," said Mr. Rogers. "It is Marie Galante, a small island that belongs



Schools of bright-colored fishes darted among the marine growths
Courtesy The Williamson Brothers Submarine Expedition. Universal Motion Pictures.

to Guadeloupe. If you look closely, you may be able to distinguish Dominica far beyond."

"Yes, I see it!" cried Paul. "It is just a faint, shadowy mass on the horizon."

The *Cormorant* soon reached Marie Galante, and although they passed within a mile or two of its lofty, frowning mountains the party did not land, but bore steadily southward for Dominica.

As they left Marie Galante astern the shadowy form of Dominica took definite shape, and mountain after mountain became visible, while deep and shadowy ravines, broad plateaus, and wide valleys were revealed in seemingly endless succession.

Closer and closer sailed the little yacht, and the boys gazed at the cloud-draped mountains, stupendous gorges, and terrible precipices. Here and there enormous, roaring cataracts sprang from amid the brilliant verdure to plunge hundreds of feet into dim purple cañons, and now and again the boys caught glimpses of broad, foaming rivers tumbling through infinitely colored valleys. In emerald amphitheatres amid the verdure nestled little villages or tiny huts, like mere dots of white against the mountain side, and above all, and like a titanic dome, rose an enormous peak.

"That's Morne Diablotin," said Mr. Rogers. "It is the highest mountain in the Lesser Antilles. You

are fortunate in obtaining a glimpse of its summit. It is usually hidden by clouds."

A mile or two farther on a broad valley appeared. Mr. Rogers, pointing to it, remarked: "There lies Portsmouth, or Prince Ruperts. It's quite a town; but it is so unhealthy it has few white inhabitants and practically no business. Do you see those sailing ships in the harbor? They are whalers, and they congregate here regularly to transfer their catch of oil to station boats which are sent from New Bedford and the Azores."

Mile after mile the yacht sailed along the coast, and the boys were kept busy watching the varied panorama that unfolded as they passed until just at sunset the yacht reached Roseau, and the boys looked upon the fairest of tropic pictures that can be imagined. From the ebon beach, against which the long swells burst in flashing foam, rose tier upon tier of wooded mountains wreathed in rose-colored clouds, and at their base nestled the white, red-roofed houses of the town. As the anchor splashed overboard, the sunset gun boomed out in thundering echoes across the water, and the English flag came fluttering down from the flagstaff on the old stone fort.

"It's like a wonderful painting!" exclaimed Paul.
"It's magnificent!"

“I can scarcely believe it’s real!” cried Harry.
“It beats everything we’ve seen yet.”

“It *is* the most beautiful of the Antilles,” remarked Mr. Rogers. “And the most interesting. Here dwell the last of the Caribs, there are active volcanoes, a boiling lake, and wonderful geysers, and there’s a fresh-water lake nearly a mile above the sea. The rainfall is the heaviest in the West Indies, and here comes a shower to welcome us.”

CHAPTER XII

THE LAND OF LINES

FOR a few moments everyone was glad to seek shelter beneath the awnings or in the cabin, for the rain fell in sheets and blotted the island from view.

“Whew!” exclaimed Harry, as the deluge roared upon the roof of the cabin and poured in miniature cataracts from the scuppers. “I don’t wonder Alice said the Nevis shower was just a ‘Scotch mist.’ I never knew it could rain so hard.”

In less than ten minutes, however, the rain ceased and the quaint town and marvelously green mountains again became visible above the turquoise sea, while stretching across a verdant valley a magnificent rainbow spread its arch.

Already a number of boats were approaching the yacht, and the boys’ attention was at once attracted to several brightly colored canoes with projecting bows and sterns, like the hulls of miniature battle-ships.

“Those are the funniest-looking boats I ever saw,” said Paul. “They seem like dugout canoes; but the fellows are rowing them.”

“Yes, and they seem to be built in sections,” replied Harry. “Those rakish bows and sterns look as if they were built onto the hulls.”

“You are right there,” said his uncle. “The Dominican canoes are made from the trunks of big forest trees known as ‘Gommier,’ and are hollowed out by hand and spread open by hot water and braces. The shells thus formed are then built up by fastening boards along the sides, and to give the boards the proper curve they are carried out beyond the dugout at bow and stern. The natives never paddle them like canoes, but invariably use short, stiff oars; thus propelled, the canoes are exceedingly fast.”

“They look mighty cranky,” remarked Harry. “I don’t think I should care to travel in one in a heavy sea.”

“On the contrary,” said Mr. Rogers, “these canoes are extremely seaworthy, and the larger ones are used for lightering barrels of lime juice, sugar, and other freight through the heaviest surf. The fishermen also use them, and do not hesitate to go far out to sea in all kinds of weather. They often sail them rail-under, and on the windward side of the island it is not unusual to see a big canoe loaded with freight and passengers sailing through a heavy sea when sloops or schooners would be double-reefed.”

As he ceased speaking, the foremost boats were

alongside, and the dusky boatmen hailed the boys and Mr. Rogers in a babel of queer English, but kept at some distance until the white revenue boat drew up at the gangway and the officers stepped aboard. A very few moments sufficed to look over the papers; and the instant the customs boat drew away the native boatmen crowded alongside, chattering, gesticulating, and carrying on a good-natured raillery among themselves.

"Why, those fellows are not talking English at all!" exclaimed Paul, who had been watching the excited crowd. "I thought Dominica was an English island."

"So it is," answered his father; "but the natives are far more French than British, and speak the strange language known as 'Patois' or 'Creole' among themselves. In fact, a large proportion of the Dominicans do not speak or understand English at all. But if we're going ashore to-night we'd better start."

Stepping to the gangway, Mr. Rogers beckoned to a bronze, grinning Hercules in a big beamy boat, and the man pushed his craft to the steps as his companions made way for him. The two boys and Mr. Rogers stepped in and were soon being pulled rapidly toward the little iron landing pier.

"What's your name, my man?" asked Mr. Rogers, as the boat danced toward the land.

"Trouble, sir," promptly replied the muscular mulatto oarsman. "Everyone know Trouble, sir."

The boys burst out laughing.

"That's no lie," said Harry. "Everyone *does* know Trouble, for a fact. But where on earth did you get that name?"

"How can tell?" answered the mulatto. "Louis Baptiste Theodore my Christian name, sir, but all folk call me Trouble for short, yes."

"All right, Trouble," said Mr. Rogers. "You look like a pretty bright boy. Can you tell us where we'll be able to hire horses for a trip to the Mountain Lake to-morrow morning?"

"Yes, sir," replied the boatman. "I get horses for you, don' fear. Wha' time you wish him, sir?"

"We'll want to get away early; say six o'clock. Do you suppose we could find someone to guide us to the Boiling Lake also?"

"Oui, M'sieu'," grinned the man. "I 'tend to all that business, sir. I have Laudat man for guide ready in mornin', sir. You make talk with he, an' he sleep you at he house in Laudat for night and take you to Boiling Lake nex' morning, O. K."

"How on earth are you going to get a man from Laudat here by to-morrow at six o'clock?" asked Mr. Rogers. "Laudat is away up in the mountains and you can't get a message there to-night."

Trouble grinned broader than ever. "No mistake,

M'sieu'. I fin' plenty Laudat man in market in the mornin' and give he message. Trus' me, sir, fo' that."

"Very well," laughed Mr. Rogers, "I'll leave it all in your hands. See that you have three good ponies at the dock at six and that the chap from Laudat is on hand so I can make all arrangements before we leave."

The boat had now reached the landing stage, and the boys and Mr. Rogers stepped ashore amid quite a little gathering of people. They were mainly black, brown, or yellow; but the majority were well and neatly dressed. A number of the ladies were fair skinned and arrayed in the daintiest and latest of European fashions, while their escorts carried walking sticks and wore dark serge suits or evening dress.

There was none of the jostling, pushing, loud-voiced attempts to sell commodities, or to impress their services upon the strangers which the boys had become accustomed to. The little crowd merely glanced at the party from the yacht, or touched their hats as they passed.

"That's the most polite crowd I've seen in the West Indies," said Paul.

"And the cleanest and best dressed," added Harry.

"They're mainly of the better class of clerks, gov-

ernment employees, and merchants," remarked his uncle; "but even the lower classes here in Dominica are very orderly and polite. There are scarcely one hundred whites on the whole island, and yet crime is almost unknown among the population of some fifty thousand."

As he spoke, a strange figure was seen approaching—a great, gaunt, coal-black negro in a blue denim suit, walking with an odd, half-hop, half-limp, who, as Harry expressed it, "looked like a one-legged grasshopper." When within a few paces, the strange fellow stopped, touched his hat, and held out a card, and in a funny, high-pitched, half-laughing voice exclaimed: "Me name Cockroach, sir. P'raps want him mango, want he olange, chicken, egg, yam, provision any kind, M'sieu'. Me cotch him. Allee steamer steward buy f'um Cockroach, sir; allee yacht buy f'um me. P'raps want pony fo' lake, want guide; want an't'ing, you tell him Cockroach he get him plenty quick. How can do, sir?"

This funny speech, the ridiculous name of "Cockroach," and the ludicrous face and grimaces of the big negro were more than the boys could stand; they both doubled up with laughter.

"We don't require any horses or guides, Cockroach," said Mr. Rogers, "but you can board the yacht and see what the steward wants. Tell him I sent you."

"Yessir, thank you kindly, sir," chuckled the negro. Touching his hat again, he strode off down the dock.

"Of all the queer characters," laughed Paul, "he's certainly the limit!"

"Won't he and Rami make a fine pair!" exclaimed Harry. "I'd like to see them together."

"He's a well-known character here," remarked Mr. Rogers, as they continued toward the town. "He was here twenty years ago, and looked just the same as to-day. With all his odd ways and apparent foolishness, he's a crafty, shrewd business man, and is really very wealthy. He's been a produce merchant and a contractor for years and years; and although he cannot read, write, or do the simplest sums in arithmetic, he carries enormous accounts and figures in his head, and does a tremendous business. He owns more than half the lighters and rowboats, a number of horses, an estate or two, and numerous houses."

The party had now reached the town, and passed along quaint, roughly paved streets illuminated by electric lights between squat stone buildings with huge wooden shutters and immense iron bars across the closed doors. One street led directly along the waterfront and was separated from the heavy surf only by a low stone wall, and this appeared to be the favorite evening promenade for the people of Ro-

seau. Everywhere the boys noted that the signs over the store doors were French; and only one or two English names were observed.

They wandered through the deserted market place, with its huge sandbox trees, climbed a little hill past the ancient fort, and seated themselves in a beautiful flower-scented and palm-embowered park in the center of which was the neat, concrete Carnegie Library and the Victoria Museum.

Everywhere neatness and cleanliness were conspicuous, and even the negro women and men were dressed in stiffly starched, attractive costumes.

Everyone was quiet and soft-voiced, and greeted the strangers with a pleasant "Ev'nin', sirs," or "Bon soir, m'sieu's."

There was little to be seen in the town itself, and as the following day was to be a strenuous one, the party soon returned to the jetty, where Trouble appeared as if by magic and rowed them to the *Cormorant*.

Breakfast the next morning was eaten before sun-up, and a few moments before six the two boys and Mr. Rogers slipped shoreward in the launch.

At the head of the dock, Trouble was on hand with three horses. They were thin, bony, unkempt-looking beasts, but Mr. Rogers assured the boys they were excellent specimens of Dominican ponies, and

would carry them in safety over roads and trails where a goat would hesitate to climb.

Standing beside Trouble and his steeds was a lithe, copper-colored man with straight black hair and almond-shaped eyes, who looked far more like an Oriental than a native. Trouble introduced this stranger as the "Laudat Man." In broken English the latter agreed to furnish sleeping accommodations and provisions for the party at his home, and to guide them to the Boiling Lake the following day, and promised to meet them at the crossroads near his village on their return trip from the Mountain Lake. All arrangements being satisfactorily adjusted, the boys and Mr. Rogers mounted their ponies and clattered off through the town toward the mountains beyond.

"We might as well take in the Botanic Station on our way," remarked Mr. Rogers. Turning to the right, the three horsemen rode up a narrow, hilly lane, passed the picturesque old cemetery, and entered the most beautiful park the boys had ever seen.

On one side rose a lofty, brush-covered hill, which, Mr. Rogers said, was known as Morne Bruce and upon which the white buildings of the Agricultural School gleamed among the foliage. Before them stretched a vast area of green lawns through which the white roadway wound in sinuous curves beneath

clumps and rows of marvelous trees. Here and there upon the lawns were gorgeous flower beds, great masses of gigantic ferns or clumps of palms, and stretching from the lower edge of the lawns to the base of Morne Bruce was a sea of fruit and ornamental trees. Here the boys saw every known species of tropical fruit, innumerable varieties of palms, countless orchids, flowering plants and shrubs, and a dozen or more kinds of rubber trees growing under the most favorable conditions and cultivated with the utmost care.

They would gladly have spent many hours loitering amid the citrus-fruit orchards, the beds of pine-apples, the hedges of vanilla beans, and the groves of ebony, mahogany, rosewood, sandalwood, rubber, and other strange trees, and could have devoted days to studying the myriads of remarkable plants, orchids, palms, and flowers with which the Botanic Station was filled.

All too soon the roadway led them to the upper gate and they passed between the Bougainvillea-covered stone posts and gained the highway and soon reached a little iron bridge across a swiftly flowing river, where they paused to gaze at the stone buildings and mills at their left.

“That was once an old sugar mill,” remarked Mr. Rogers. “But it’s now devoted to boiling lime juice and crushing the limes from the vast estate

just beyond. The estate is called the 'Bath,' and is the largest of its kind in the world. It belongs to Rose and Company of London. So important is the lime industry in Dominica that the island may well be called the 'Land of Limes.' "

As they continued their journey, Mr. Rogers pointed out the vast extent of the lime groves through which the road extended, and which swept away to north, south, and east to the hills and mountainsides where the dark green of the lime trees merged with the coppery foliage of cocoa.

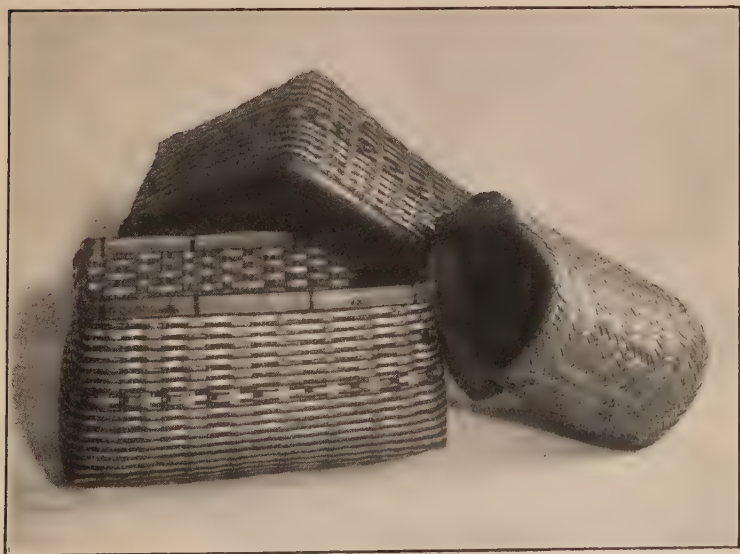
Here and there the boys saw little knots of negro girls and women seated beneath the trees, huge piles of golden-yellow limes beside them, and chatting and singing as they deftly grated the fruits upon strange funnel-shaped graters to extract the fragrant lime oil. As the party from the yacht passed by the good-natured workers called to them in English or Patois, begging pennies.

Several carts were met loaded with green and yellow limes, and everywhere under the trees the earth was covered with the golden fruit, and at one spot a number of cows and oxen were munching the fallen limes. Mr. Rogers remarked that one visitor who saw the cattle thus eating limes stated that the Dominican cows must give "limeade instead of milk."

Beyond the lime orchards the road gradually ascended among cocoa trees, banana groves, clumps of



Negro girls and women seated beside huge piles of limes



The baskets were woven of palm in geometrical patterns

gigantic grass, masses of flowering vines, palms, and silk-cotton trees. On one side the hills rose upward for hundreds of feet, and on the other lay the green, lime-filled valley with the Roseau River sparkling in its center.

Every few moments the party met gayly clad natives coming to market in the town, their starched, flowing skirts or white duck trousers tucked high above bare feet and legs, loaded trays or baskets filled with fruits and vegetables upon their heads, and quite often with their shoes perched safely on top of all. But all seemed cheerful and happy, all had a pleasant smile or cheery greeting, and all appeared of a far more intelligent and more comely race than any other West Indians the boys had seen.

“The Dominicans *are* a superior race of colored people,” said Mr. Rogers. “This may be due to the original stock brought over as slaves, for among them were many of the Zulus and other natives of Southern Africa. But no doubt the large percentage of Carib Indian blood in most of the natives has been a great factor in improving the race. If you noticed the Laudat man this morning, you must have seen that his features were far more like an Indian’s or an Oriental’s than a negro’s. The same is true of nearly all the natives from the outlying districts. You’ll find that a large proportion have straight hair and regular features, while

many have almond-shaped or oblique eyes and their color approaches the copper tint of the Indian, rather than the dusky brown or black of the negro."

"Shall we see any Caribs?" asked Harry.

"We may meet some on the road, or we may find some at Laudat," replied his uncle. "There are often several at Laudat, especially on market days, and as a rule a few come over to market each Saturday."

"Where do they live?" asked Paul.

"They have a settlement or reservation of their own on the windward side of the island at a spot called Salybia," replied his father. "And there most of them dwell in a little village; but a number are scattered over the island at other places. Many of them have married colored natives."

"Are they all civilized?" asked Harry.

"Yes; there are no longer any wild Caribs," answered his uncle. "But for a great many years they remained savage, and unconquered by the French and British. Only by granting them a reservation and allowing them to make their own laws and govern themselves did the British finally establish peaceful relations with them. They're still proud and dignified, and consider themselves above the negroes, and seldom become servants, as do the colored people. They cultivate the land, but depend for a livelihood upon the sale of their remarkable waterproof palm baskets and other handiwork more

than upon the sale of produce. They're a strange race, and are particularly interesting as the last pure-blooded representatives of the original natives of the islands."

The ponies had been steadily trotting up the grade and now at a turn of the road the boys drew rein to gaze down upon the marvelously beautiful scene far below them.

From where they stood, the whole Roseau valley lay spread like a map at their feet, with its pale-green cane fields, dark lime orchards, and copper-green cocoa groves, amid which the river sparkled and shimmered in the brilliant sunshine. On either hand rose wooded hills and frowning mountains. Here and there among the foliage were little wattled huts or whitewashed plantation buildings, and between two distant cliffs the Caribbean Sea gleamed like a polished sapphire beyond the breaking surf.

Reluctantly the boys resumed their ride, and, turning a bend of the roadway, entered a narrow mountain gorge. Here the air was cool and damp, for no sunlight penetrated between the mighty peaks on either hand, and the deep silence was broken only by the far-off tinkle of a mountain brook and the flute-like call of the Siffleur Montaigne, a shy gray bird that dwells only in the primeval forests of these mountain heights.

Beside the roadway the earth dropped sharply

down for a thousand feet to a foaming stream in the bed of the cañon, and as the ponies climbed upward around jutting rocks and projecting banks their hoofs dislodged little masses of stone and earth from the edge of the road, which rattled and crashed among the foliage to the bottom of the abyss.

"Whew! This makes me nervous!" exclaimed Paul. "I'm going to get off and walk if this keeps on," he continued. "Just think of tumbling down into that gorge!"

"Never fear," answered his father. "I've never heard of a Dominican pony going over the edge. They're accustomed to this work; and, while it may seem dangerous to you, in reality you are perfectly safe as long as you give the pony his own way and let him pick his own foothold."

"Just look at those trees, Paul!" exclaimed Harry. "See those tremendous vines hanging from the limbs and the air plants and orchids on them."

"That tree is one of the gommiers from which the natives make their canoes," said Mr. Rogers, "but it's not an exceptionally large one. The forest trees here often reach a height of two hundred feet or more, with the lowest branches over one hundred feet from the earth, and with enormous, buttressed roots spreading forty or fifty feet in every direction."

"Why is the tree called 'Gommier'?" asked Har-

ry. "It sounds as if it had something to do with gum."

"So it has," replied his uncle. "The Gommier tree excretes a clear, resinous gum known to commerce as 'Gum Elemi.' The natives use it in constructing torches or flambeaux, for it burns slowly with a brilliant white flame and gives off aromatic smoke."

"I think the vines and air plants are as remarkable as the trees," said Paul. "Some of those vines are as big as ship's cables, and are twisted like real ropes."

"The natives use the vines as ropes and cords, as you know," said his father. "You may remember that Harry was drawn up from the old dungeon by one of them. Rattan is also a certain kind of liana. One species contains a clear, refreshing sap, and the traveler in the woods, when thirsty, has merely to cut off one of these vines to obtain a draught of cool, clear water."

"It makes me thirsty to hear about it," said Harry. "Let's stop and get a drink from that spring ahead."

The others were also thirsty, and, dismounting, they sat upon the rocks by the roadside spring and slaked their thirst with the clear water that bubbled from amid the moss-covered ledges.

Presently the three travelers remounted their

horses and resumed their journey, ever mounting higher and higher among the mountains. Passing a road that branched to the right, Mr. Rogers said that this was the trail to Laudat, where they were to meet their guide to the Boiling Lake. A little later they topped the last ridge, and, rounding a bend in the road, looked upon the wonderful Mountain Lake.

Surrounded by rounded, heavily wooded mountain summits on all sides, the lake gleamed like a pool of quicksilver, its placid surface reflecting the spreading tree ferns and overhanging shrubs about its shores. Far across the bed of the little valley it extended, its irregular shores winding in and out among the trees, and so silent and lonely was it that the boys had a strange sensation of being the first human beings to look upon it.

"Is the lake deep?" asked Harry, at last. "It looks like a bully place to take a swim."

"The lake is called 'bottomless,' " answered Mr. Rogers. "Soundings of a thousand feet and more have been made without reaching bottom, and the shores drop off abruptly. You'd find it intensely cold for a swim, and might easily lose your life if you attempted it, for the water contains innumerable submerged weeds and water-logged débris. If you should have a cramp, you'd very likely drown before you could reach the shore. Even if you *did* reach the edge, you would find difficulty in getting

onto dry land, for the edges of the lake are composed of floating vegetation growing upon the surface of the water which will give way under the least weight."

"It seems a mighty queer place for a lake," remarked Paul. "I don't see any river or brook flowing into it."

"It *is* a queer place for a lake," agreed his father. "For it is over three thousand feet above the sea, and it has no inlet and no outlet, so far as known. The lake occupies the crater of an extinct volcano, and a similar lake filled the crater of Morne Pelee in Martinique before the terrible eruption.

"Ah! Here comes a cloud. Now you'll be able to experience a new sensation."

As he spoke, dense masses of white, fog-like vapor rolled over the mountain tops above the lake, and in a moment the distant hills and peaks, the lake, and even the nearest trees were shut out from sight as by a thick white blanket. The boys shivered with the chill, damp air, and drops of moisture formed on their clothing and trickled in streams from their hats, their horses' sides, and from every leaf and branch of the surrounding brush.

"Come, let's get under the shelter of the rest-house," exclaimed Mr. Rogers. "This cloud may stay for several hours, or it may pass over in a few

moments; but we'll be chilled and wet through if we stay in it."

He led the boys and the ponies to a rough board shanty beside the road; and here, in the shelter of the porch, they were partly protected from the moisture of the enveloping clouds.

"We're going to have a thunder shower," exclaimed Paul, as a low rumble broke the silence.

Mr. Rogers laughed. "That's not thunder, my boy, although I'm not surprised you thought it was. That's the noise of the Boiling Lake. If it were not for the cloud, you might see the steam rising from it above the mountain ridge on the farther side of the lake."

"Does the Boiling Lake really boil?" asked Harry.

"I'm not going to tell you until you see it and judge for yourselves," replied his uncle. "But if you listen to the noise it's making now, even though it's nearly five miles away, you can realize that it's no ordinary lake."

The rumbling sound had now increased so greatly in volume that it sounded like the passage of a heavy train over a near-by trestle, and the earth trembled with the vibration.

"It must be some lake to make all that racket!" remarked Paul, as the sound gradually died away.

"I certainly shall be curious to see what it looks like."

The cloud had now thinned out, and was fast disappearing in little wisps of vapor.

"I'm going to get a picture of the lake before another cloud comes along and spoils my chances," said Harry.

The party then ate lunch, and, mounting their ponies, resumed their ride.

Presently Paul called his father's attention to the great variety of ferns which grew on every side. Mr. Rogers said that these were a sure indication of high altitudes, where the foliage was frequently bathed in mist or clouds.

"Hold my horse's bridle a moment," he added, "and I'll show you something strange in the way of ferns."

Dismounting, he stepped to the roadside and picked several fronds of a very ordinary-looking fern which grew abundantly along the damp bank. Telling Harry to hold out his arm, Mr. Rogers placed one of the fronds upon his nephew's coat sleeve, gave it a sharp pat with his open palm, and removed the leaf.

Harry uttered an exclamation of surprise, for, stamped in snowy white upon the dark cloth of his coat, was the perfect facsimile of the fern leaf.

"Your turn now, Paul," laughed Mr. Rogers, and,

approaching his son, he repeated the operation. As he removed the leaf, Paul saw, not the white imprint he had expected, but instead a beautiful pattern in golden-yellow.

“Of all wonderful things!” cried Harry, as he examined the tracery on his cousin’s sleeve. “ ’Twas funny enough to see that leaf make a white picture on my coat, but I can’t see why it should make a yellow pattern on Paul’s!”

“It’s very simple,” said Mr. Rogers. “There were really two different species of ferns used. One is known as the ‘silver fern,’ the other as the ‘gold fern.’ The under surfaces of the fronds in both species are covered with a thin coating of powdery dust; white in one species and yellow in the other, as you can see.” He handed the boys several of the ferns to examine.

“It’s mighty interesting, anyhow,” said Paul, as he stamped pattern after pattern on his clothing; and Harry fully agreed with him.

Presently a low rise was surmounted, the road began to descend, and the boys were greeted with a half gale of wind that swept over the mountains.

“We’ve crossed the divide of the island,” explained Mr. Rogers. “We are now on the windward or Atlantic side. Here you feel the full force of the northeast trade wind, and you can imagine how

rough the sea must be along the eastern coast of the island with this wind blowing continuously."

In a few moments the steep descent of the road carried the party within the shelter of a low ridge, and the boys looked down across seemingly endless ridges, peaks, hilltops, and wooded valleys to the distant Atlantic, which, white-capped and dark, broke in a long white line of surf upon a jet-black beach.

"It's not one-half as pretty as the other side of the island," said Harry, after studying the scene in silence for a short time.

"It's much wilder and it looks higher," added Paul.

"I wonder if our pirate's treasure is down there," said his cousin. "It looks like a good place for buccaneers."

"I can assure you there's no spot that corresponds with your map on the windward side of Dominica," said Mr. Rogers. "The coast in most places is almost inaccessible, and there are no mangrove swamps, no such small keys, and no such limestone caves."

"Well, it saves us the trouble of searching, then," mused Harry.

"And cuts one more island off the list," added Paul.

The party now turned back and soon after reached

the Mountain Lake, where they stopped for a few moments for a last look at the lonely, mysterious place; then headed toward the crossroad to Laudat.

As they reached the spot where the road turned off, a man rose from his seat on a fallen tree and approached them. He proved to be the Laudat man whom Trouble had introduced, but he was so altered in his appearance that the boys scarcely recognized him.

When they had seen him in Roseau, he was neatly dressed in a serge suit, tan shoes, and felt hat, and appeared a well-to-do and highly civilized citizen.

As he now greeted them, he seemed a wild, semi-savage Indian, for stained and ragged canvas trousers, the remnants of a calico shirt, and a knotted handkerchief about his head formed his costume, while a big machete in his belt, a powder horn at his side, and a long-barreled gun in his hand gave him quite a warlike aspect.

He smiled pleasantly, however, and at once led the way down the muddy side road through the thick woods. He chatted as he walked along, informed the boys that his name was George LeBrun, but that he was called "Thursday," and promised good weather for a trip to the Boiling Lake on the morrow.

"Old Robinson Crusoe didn't have anything on us," remarked Harry. "He may have had a man

Friday, but I don't believe he was any more picturesque than our man Thursday."

"I'll wager that if Crusoe had seen Thursday's footprints he would have been scared to death," said Paul. "Just look at that chap's feet."

"Why, he has six toes!" exclaimed Harry.

"Oui, m'sieu', an' seben on odder one. Look, see, m'sieu'." Thursday proudly held up first one foot and then the other for examination.

"Well, I never!" began Paul. He was interrupted by his cousin, who cried:

"Why, he has six fingers, also!"

"I don't wonder you're surprised," said Mr. Rogers, "but it's not at all unusual for these mountaineers to have six or seven fingers or toes, although I don't think I ever met one of them with such a large total before."

Presently the party reached a barred gate, and, passing through, came upon a broad, sloping, grassy pasture. Before them, at the farther edge of the fields, was a neat wooden chapel surrounded with flowers, and amid clumps of banana and bread-fruit trees were neat wooden huts and numerous wattled sheds.

"Welcome to Laudat, m'sieu's!" said their guide, as the boys glanced about.

"What a beautiful situation for a village!" exclaimed Harry.

There was ample cause for his remark, for the boys looked upon a scene of surpassing loveliness. Beyond the pastures and the church stretched a vast panorama of mountains, valleys, and hills, reaching westward to the blue Caribbean, and so clear was the air and so brilliant the light that the little houses of distant Roseau, the boats at anchor in the roadstead, and even the white-hulled *Cormorant* were plainly visible and seemed scarcely a stone's throw away.

To right and left the pasture land stretched to the surrounding mountains, and to the rear the rounded summit of Morne Macaque towered above the village, a wreath of fleecy cloud about its forest-crowned brow, and as the boys rode forward over the sward, they looked about in admiration.

On the farther edge of the slope their guide stopped before a little slab cottage, the party dismounted, and a comely native woman welcomed them to Thursday's home.

The boys were quite tired with their long day in the saddle, and were glad enough to loll in the shade of a bread-fruit tree upon native-made chairs and benches. The air was cool and invigorating, a soft breeze rustled among the leaves overhead, doves cooed in a cote on a post near by, and the Creole words of Thursday and his wife could be heard indistinctly from behind the house. Thursday soon

appeared with a great pitcher of fresh milk and a dish of wild red raspberries.

"I never knew they had raspberries down here," cried Paul. "I thought they only grew in the North."

"On these high mountains they're very abundant," said his uncle. "The natives call them 'fuez' and you'll find them very good."

The boys agreed that the Dominican berries had an even "woodsier" flavor than the Northern berries; and, having finished the berries and milk, they felt much refreshed and were ready for the stroll about the village which Mr. Rogers suggested.

From the doorways of the little huts, half-naked, copper-skinned children, swarthy-faced, fierce-mustached men and turbaned girls and women gazed curiously at the strangers; but they all smiled and greeted them pleasantly in soft Patois.

The boys found there were about twenty houses in the little settlement, and that all the inhabitants were related, many bearing the surname of Laudat. A number did not either speak or understand English, while others spoke it perfectly. The people were far more like Indians than negroes in appearance, although there were quite a few pure blacks, and Mr. Rogers informed the boys that nearly every person in Laudat had considerable Carib blood in his or her veins.

They were very anxious to see a pure aborigine, and were greatly pleased when in one little cottage Mr. Rogers pointed out a young man and woman chatting with the owners of the house. He said they were undoubtedly Caribs, and a question to Thursday, who was with the party, confirmed Mr. Rogers' surmise. Paul and Harry noted that the Caribs were rather short and stocky, with coppery-brown or yellowish-brown skins, straight, coarse, blue-black hair, broad oval faces, and very oblique eyes. In fact, they looked almost exactly like many Japanese the boys had seen, and their soft brown eyes, smiling faces, and neat clothes gave them an appearance far from savage.

They could speak nothing but Patois, but with Thursday as an interpreter the boys carried on a conversation with them. Finding they were on their way to Roseau to sell baskets and other Carib handiwork, Harry and Paul purchased a nest of the baskets as a souvenir of the first Caribs they had seen.

The baskets were wonderful examples of the art, and were woven of polished strips of Mahoe palm over a bamboo framework, and were worked into attractive geometrical patterns of black, white, and dull red. Thursday assured the boys that the baskets would hold water, and explained that to make them waterproof a layer of wild plantain leaves was

enclosed between the outer and inner coverings of woven palm.

"I'm glad we've seen some real Caribs," said Paul, as the boys bade good-by to the Indians and turned toward Thursday's home.

"They didn't look a bit ferocious or like any Indians I've ever seen before," said Harry.

"They're very peaceable and pleasant people today," explained his uncle. "But until within a comparatively few years they held cannibal feasts on certain occasions. In the old days they were inveterate cannibals and fierce, warlike fighters. But, like the Mongolians, whom they more strongly resemble than any other Indian race, it's impossible to judge their characters or thoughts from the bland, pleasant expression they habitually wear."

Dinner was ready by the time the party reached their temporary home, and the boys sat down with good appetites to a native meal of boiled and baked yams, boiled breadfruit, roast wild pigeon, and a stew.

"I wonder what the stew's made of," said Harry, after his second helping. "It's mighty good, but it has a different flavor from anything I ever tasted before."

"Perhaps it's those palm worms father told us about," laughed Paul.

"I'll ask Thursday," said Mr. Rogers.

To his question Thursday promptly replied:
“ ‘Guana, m’sieu’.”

“What’s ‘Guana’?” asked Harry.

“By ‘Guana’ he means Iguana,” said Mr. Rogers, “which, as you perhaps know, is a kind of gigantic lizard.”

For a moment Harry looked disgustedly at the plate of stew; then, taking a good mouthful, he said: “Well, I don’t care whether it’s lizard or not, it’s the best stew I’ve ever tasted, and hereafter I’ll never hesitate to taste any new dish, whether it’s made of bird, animal, or insect.”

“I don’t doubt but our host can accommodate you with some groo-groo worms if you’d like to try them,” laughed Mr. Rogers. Turning to Thursday, he asked if it was possible to let the boys sample some. The man stated that they were “out of season,” however, and the boys were forced to forego testing the edible qualities of the roasted grubs.

“Do they have any other queer things to eat in Dominica?” asked Paul.

“Yes,” replied his father, “there’s a gigantic land frog which is known as crapaud, but it is commonly served in the hotels and boarding houses as ‘mountain chicken.’ It is perfectly delicious. There’s also the agouti, a sort of giant wild guinea pig, which is hunted as game and is eaten either fresh or smoked like ham. Parrots are also used as

food at certain seasons, but they are rather scarce and are more often seen on the windward than on the leeward side of the island."

"I didn't know they had wild parrots here," said Harry. "What sort of parrots are they? Do they learn to talk?"

"There are two species," explained Mr. Rogers. "The smaller is larger than the green Mexican parrots we see in cages at home, and is a very handsome bird with scarlet and blue wings and tail, and often with a scarlet breast. It's found only on Dominica. The other species is the largest true parrot in the world, larger than the great cockatoos we see in menageries. In color it's green and royal purple, and its scientific name, 'Imperial Parrot,' is very appropriate. Both species learn to talk readily, but they are nearly exterminated through persistent hunting, although they are rigidly protected by law during the greater portion of the year. Strangely enough, the West Indian parrots are always peculiar to the islands they inhabit, and in many of the islands they've become quite extinct."

"What a pity!" said Paul. "It would be so interesting to see wild parrots flying about."

"Many other birds have also been nearly or quite exterminated. Formerly Dominica had a strange bird known as the Diablotin, a sort of gigantic petrel, which lived in burrows on the mountains and

was so fat and such delicious eating that it was hunted with dogs. It has been supposedly extinct for many years. In fact, as far as known, not a single specimen was ever preserved, and no one knows exactly what sort of a bird it was. Morne Diablotin was named after these birds, which formerly were abundant upon its slopes.”

There was scarcely any twilight, and as darkness fell Thursday’s wife lit a candle and placed it on the table. A few moments later Harry chanced to see the woman catch a fluttering moth which had been attracted by the light, singe its wings in the flame, and toss it out of the window. A moment later she repeated the operation.

“Isn’t that a cruel way to treat those moths!” said Harry. “Why doesn’t she kill them and be done with it?”

“She has a reason for burning the wings of the moths,” explained Mr. Rogers. “She firmly believes that they’re gossiping neighbors who have the power of assuming the forms of insects and who come to the house to spy upon her. She believes that if she singes their wings she can discover who they are by noting which of her neighbors have burns on their hands in the morning.”

“Oh, Uncle George! You don’t expect us to believe that?” cried Harry.

“It’s certainly a fact,” said his uncle. “You can

scarcely believe how superstitious these natives are, or how much faith they have in witchcraft, voodooism, Obeah, and other supernatural and occult matters. They tell marvelous tales of happenings and occurrences which to us seem absolutely preposterous and foolish but in which they believe implicitly."

"I'd like to hear some of those yarns," said Paul.

"Possibly Thursday can tell you one," said Mr. Rogers. "We'll ask him."

Addressing their host, who was squatted in the doorway, Mr. Rogers inquired if he had ever seen a "Jumbie."

The man looked about nervously, rose and closed door and windows, and then replied: "Oui, m'sieu'; many zombie, yes!"

"What were they like?" asked Mr. Rogers.

"Some he look like cow, some he look like dog, some he look like little piece fire in air," answered Thursday.

"What do the Jumbies do?" inquired Harry.

"They do plenty harm, m'sieu'. Some he jus' humbug people, other he mek you los', other he come to house to mek mischief, an' the mos' bad of all he suck blood from folk when they mek sleep."

"That must be a vampire," said Paul.

"No, m'sieu', he call 'Siconier,' " replied Thursday, in a hushed tone.

“What does the Siconier look like?” asked Mr. Rogers. “Did you ever see one?”

“Siconier he Jumbie wha’ is ol’ woman. He can take off he skin and go about in the air, an’ no one can to see he. When day make he put on he skin an’ ol’ womans again. Never I see one of he, m’sieu’, but I know story of one. He got cotch in Roseau.”

“Do tell us about it!” cried both the boys.

After a moment’s thought, Thursday told the following strange tale:

“On the savanne near the fort one time a Siconier live in a hut on the savanne aige. This Siconier an ol’, ol’ womans named Zoot, an’ all the worl’ say he mek Obeah many times. Ol’ Zoot live with a leetle black boy to mek message for he. The boy come from Barbados, an’ all people say Zoot steal he away; but I don’ know myself how is that.

“At all event, the ol’ woman beat leetle boy a-plenty an’ try fo’ to make he ’fraid, yes; but the boy never to mek afraid of Obeah like the Creole, no. Ev’ry day when it come night ol’ Zoot go a-sneakin’ off an’ come home in the mornin’ an’ sleep all ’e day.

“One time the ol’ woman sleep late, an’ the boy mek to sleep before Zoot wake up. The ol’ woman plenty mad when he see how late he sleep an’ he hop about an’ cut capers an’ mek noise wha’ wake up

the leetle boy; but the boy stay still in he bed an' mek out to sleep an' hear to what old Zoot talk to heself.

“At las’ the ol’ woman begin to mek spell, an’ the leetle boy see Zoot slip off he skin an’ stan’ there all red an’ like beef, yes. Then the Siconier roll he skin in bundle and slip it under he bed, an’ then he turn to he bed an’ say, ‘Oh, Pápá! Ouill, Pápá! Take care of mah skin. I too late for to go to the Jumbie tree, so good Pápá Moin take watch on mah skin!’

“Then the ol’ woman fly out of the house, an’ leave the leetle boy all by heself.

“Fo’ long time the boy lie still in he bed, thinkin’, an’ now he know ol’ Zoot a Siconier fo’ true. Pretty soon he rise up and look under the bed, an’ he see the skin an’ he pull it out and tuck it under he arm. Then he open the door an’ run fast, fast, across the savanne to the fort. When he reach at the fort he tell the inspector an’ say, ‘M’sieu’ Inspector, here am I with Zoot skin, an’ if yo’ keep he skin the Siconier boun’ to come back for to get it, an’ when he come back you cotch him, yes.’

“The inspector he plenty please to get the Siconier skin, yes; an’ he put it safe in he box in he office.

“When the Siconier fly back to the house an’ look under he bed an’ see he skin gone, he mek plenty

noise an' look to see the black boy mekin' sleep in he bed. The Siconier 'fraid for to wake up the leetle boy, for fear he see he without he skin, an' so he stop kiyowlin' an' mek a spell to fin' where gone he skin.

"Then he fly to the fort, an' when he come to the gate two Bobbies grab he arm an' shove he in the cell. One Bobby tell the Inspector, an' m'sieu' come out an' meks to see the ol' woman an' he looks an' say: 'Ah, you ol' rascal, I have you for true now. I takin' you to the Magistrate to-day.'

"Then ol' Zoot mek to cry, an' call out: 'Eh, eh, m'sieu'! Please to give me mah skin. Oh, kind m'sieu'! Ah can' go to Court without mah skin, an' you know, m'sieu', Ah can' to wear clothes without skin.'

"The inspector stop an' think a leetle minute. He know the ol' woman speak true, for he can' take him to the street without he clothes; an Zoot can' put on he clothes over he raw flesh, so at las' the inspector get the skin from the box an' give atwix the bars to ol' Zoot, an' the ol' woman say: '*Merci, bien m'sieu',*' an' put on he skin quick like he can.

"When it mek time for court an' the Bobbies go to take Zoot by the arms an' walk down to town they fin' jus' a ol' woman in the cell an' they mek to call the inspector.

"M'sieu' mek a good look at Zoot an' he can' see

as how he look like a Siconier an' he know he can' *prove* he can take off he skin, so he open the cell an' let he go free."

"I really think Thursday believes that's all true," said Paul, as he blew out the candle and tumbled into the big mahogany bed.

"Well, I hope no Siconier bites our feet to-night," yawned Harry.

A few minutes later both boys were sleeping soundly, lulled to slumber by the shrill night songs of innumerable insects and the distant rumble of the Boiling Lake.

CHAPTER XIII

A PICNIC IN A CRATER

“WHEW, but it’s cold!” cried Paul, hastily turning up the collar of his khaki coat, as he stepped out of the house at dawn the next morning. “Who’d ever think of shivering in the tropics?”

“You must remember that we’re three thousand feet above the sea,” said Mr. Rogers, “and the temperature frequently drops to forty-five degrees at night in these mountains. But you’ll be warm enough after the sun gets up and you begin to climb through the high woods.”

Thursday now joined them with a big basket pack strapped on his shoulders, and leading the way, he walked rapidly through the dew-soaked grass toward the dark forests to the east.

Descending a steep ravine through a rank growth of shrubs and wild plantains, their guide splashed knee-deep into a roaring mountain brook. For a moment the boys hesitated.

“Does he expect us to wade through there also?” asked Paul.

“You’ll have to if you expect to see the Boiling

Lake," replied his father. "And it's not the last stream you'll ford to-day by any means."

"We can't get any wetter than we are now, at any rate," said Harry, and followed by the others, he splashed through the little stream.

The trail they were following was narrow, winding, and slippery as soap. The vegetation on either side showered the party with water as they brushed against the leaves and branches, and in a few moments everyone was drenched to the skin. Presently the path entered the gardens of the Laudat colony, and the boys traveled through a labyrinth of yam and sweet potato vines, banana trees, cocoa, and fruit trees. But Thursday kept up a steady dog trot, and the boys had no time to look about as they panted along the trail in his footsteps.

They were already thoroughly warmed up by their exertions, and when, a few moments later, they left the gardens behind and plunged into the silent forest, they called out to Thursday to wait a few minutes and allow them a rest.

Their guide stopped obediently and waited silently while the boys sat upon a fallen tree and regained their breaths in the cool shade of the enormous trees.

Presently the boys rose and again the party started onward, but Thursday led the way more slowly and the boys found little difficulty in keeping pace with him.

For an hour or more the way led steadily upward through the forest. Then another stream was forded, and again they climbed by slippery muddy trails among the trees until at last the boys were once more compelled to ask their guide to halt.

"My, but this is hard work!" panted Harry, as they sat beside the trail and fanned their faces with their hats. "Have we much farther to go, Uncle Charles?"

"About twice as far as we've traveled," answered Mr. Rogers; "but while the trail is bad and the climb pretty steep, the real reason you're so exhausted is on account of the altitude. Thursday doesn't mind it as he's accustomed to it; but we're nearly a mile above the sea and the thin atmosphere affects your lungs and heart. You'll get accustomed to it before long."

Scrambling up steep muddy banks, crawling over projecting roots, pushing through tangled vines, fording streams, but ever within the shade of the immense forest, the party toiled on and up. Sometimes a bronze quail dove would whirr like a partridge from the pathway; occasionally they caught a glimpse of a scurrying agouti, and frequently the song of the Siffleur Montagne or some other woodland bird would burst from dark ravine or from the treetops a hundred feet above the heads of the travelers.

Here and there great tree ferns grew among the larger forest trees, and gradually they became more and more numerous until, at the top of a steep ridge, the party found themselves in a forest of these gigantic ferns. On every hand rose the huge, rough, hairy trunks, crowned with the enormous feather-like fronds thirty or forty feet in length, while the ground was knee-deep with a soft, damp carpet of rotting trunks, fallen fronds, and strange coiled buds that had dropped from the innumerable trees.

Leaving the tree-fern forest behind, the party pressed through a brushy jungle and came out upon a narrow hog-back ridge, on either side of which the boys looked down into enormous forest-filled cañons thousands of feet in depth. Here the wind swept in a perfect gale, and the boys noticed that the trees were stunted and twisted into strange forms by its force. They were frequently compelled to brace themselves against the puffs of the gale, and during the lulls they heard the rumbling roar of the Boiling Lake loud as heavy thunder.

It was slow, tedious work pushing through the gnarled and twisted growths, and often Thursday led the way over the tops of the trees which grew so low and so closely that their stunted, interlaced branches formed a firm and secure foothold.

Borne on the wind was a strong odor of sulphur, and Mr. Rogers told the boys that they were now

close to the Boiling Lake, and that in a few moments they would see the crater.

A few yards farther they passed the last stunted trees and stepped forth onto an open space covered with coarse grass and weeds. Before them stretched a huge, irregular pit nearly a thousand feet in depth and a mile or more across. Its sides were seamed and scarred, and burnt to a vivid red, with here and there glaring white and yellow patches of sulphur, or jutting blue-black ledges and boulders, and around the edges stood charred skeletons of great trees, mute testimonials of the forces which had torn this enormous cavity deep in the mountain top.

Almost at their feet a dense mass of white steam floated slowly upward, and from the dull-red floor of the crater many other clouds of vapor rose hissing into the air.

Standing on the edge of the wind-swept ridge far above the inferno, the boys were almost deafened by the noise of the many hundred jets of escaping steam and the roaring and rumbling of subterranean forces.

"Goodness, what a sight!" cried Harry, after they had stood gazing at the crater for a few moments.

"But I don't see any lake," said Paul.

"You're not in sight of the Boiling Lake yet," answered his father; "but if you look yonder"—pointing to the farther end of the enormous crater—

“you can see where it lies. There, just where that cloud of steam rolls over the ridge.”

Following the direction indicated, the boys saw the great mass of white vapor.

“How on earth do we reach it?” asked Paul. “It seems to be right in the center of this big pit.”

“So it is,” said his father. “And we’re going right through the center of the crater to see it. You’d better take some pictures now while you have the chance.”

Thursday scrambled over the edge, Mr. Rogers followed him, and, without more ado, the two boys stepped gingerly over the brink onto the narrow ledge that zigzagged down the almost precipitous slope. Thursday’s many-toed bare feet had no difficulty in securing a firm foothold among the rocks and pebbles, but the heavy-soled boots of Mr. Rogers and the boys slipped and slid and dislodged stones that went bounding down to the bottom of the crater and Harry and Paul involuntarily shuddered to think of what would be their fate if they made a single false step or lost their balance for one brief instant.

Back and forth upon the all but perpendicular wall the footway led downward, until after what seemed hours to the boys, but which in reality was but a few minutes, the fairly level crater floor was

reached, and half in wonder and half in fear, the party paused to take breath and look about.

"I'll bet Dante came here before he wrote his 'Inferno,' " said Paul, at last. "I never imagined anything so wild and awful really existed."

"It certainly fits the popular idea of the infernal regions," said Mr. Rogers. "But it did *not* exist in Dante's time by any means. In fact, this crater was only formed about thirty years ago, although the Boiling Lake was known several years before that time. The lake, however, occupied a comparatively small crater farther to the east, but with a single tremendous eruption this entire mountain top blew out, leaving the pit in which we stand. It was a rainy windy day, and, though the stones and ashes fell in Roseau, and were even recorded from Barbados and other islands, no damage was done to lives or property."

"I hope it doesn't blow out while we're here," said Paul. "It looks mighty lively yet. Just see those geysers yonder!" He pointed to a group of fountains of boiling water and steam that were roaring and spouting fifty feet in the air a quarter of a mile distant near the farther side of the crater.

"There's little danger," said Mr. Rogers. "Of course, no one can say when an active volcano may have an eruption, and this volcano is quite active, as you note. Do you feel how the earth trembles

under your feet? Touch it with your hand and you'll find it quite hot, and in many places scalding water is close to the surface. But let's have a nearer view of Paul's geyser, so you can get some good photographs."

Following Thursday, who led the way gingerly among the great laval bombs, bowlders, and patches of yellow sulphur crystals which were strewn over the floor of the crater, the party approached the group of geysers which had attracted Paul's attention.

At close quarters they were even more wonderful than they had appeared at a distance, and the boys gazed at the big jets of ink-black water and masses of snowy steam that were incessantly being thrown many feet upward from queer miniature craters of mud and sand. Sometimes a geyser would die down, only to break out with renewed energy some distance away, at times spouting straight upward, then throwing its scalding discharge almost horizontally. The boys soon found the soles of their feet becoming uncomfortably warm, and, noticing that Thursday had perched himself upon a large bowlder, they followed his example.

Grinning at the manner in which the boys hopped about to cool their feet, the guide drew his machete and thrust it into the earth; as he withdrew it, a tiny stream of hot water and steam shot upward.

"Why, the whole place is filled with steam and boiling water under the surface!" cried Harry. "Just think what would happen if we broke through."

"There's no danger of that," laughed his uncle, "unless you step into some fissure or crack. The steam and hot water percolate through the crevices, and as soon as an opening is made in the earth it issues forth; but you might dig down many feet and still find solid ground."

"Well, I, for one, don't care for the place, anyway," said Paul. "It's altogether too uncanny and dangerous. Let's hurry along and see the Boiling Lake."

"Very well," replied his father. "There's not much more to see here, and it's time to have lunch, so if you have the pictures you want we'll hurry along. We'll picnic beside the Boiling Lake."

Flowing from the group of geysers was a rushing stream of boiling hot water, and along the banks of this strange rivulet the guide led the way across the crater. Very soon the roar of the steam was left behind, and the boys were surprised to find hardy shrubs, small stunted trees, coarse grass, and numerous gold and silver ferns growing along the banks of the little river and clothing the barren red ground with a mantle of green.

In several places the trees grew to considerable



The great bowl was a roaring, churning cauldron



Fountains of boiling water and steam were spouting fifty feet in the air

size and formed miniature forests. Pushing through these the party ascended a low ridge and came upon a second barren area of red cinders and sulphur-coated sand, through which flowed another stream of black hot water, its banks and bed coated with a thick crust of borax and sulphur.

All over this desolate plain, and even in the bed and banks of the brook, were hundreds of little geysers, steaming pools and miniature craters, while a terrible odor of sulphuretted hydrogen and sulphur pervaded the air. Threading his way carefully over this dangerous spot, Thursday led the party up a steep hillside. Peering over the summit, the boys looked upon the Boiling Lake itself.

Before them was a bowl-shaped depression about 150 yards across, filled to the brim with bubbling, milky water, half veiled in a mist of drifting steam.

Gradually the ebullition in the center increased; and boiling more and more violently, the water rapidly rose far above the surrounding surface, while from the seething mass scalding waves dashed and broke against the rocky shores. Steam rose in clouds from the surface, and presently the great bowl was a roaring, churning cauldron. The ground trembled and shook, and the roar of the subterranean forces was deafening. A puff of wind blew the thick vapor toward the boys, and with a cry of warning Thursday dragged them from the edge, and

Mr. Rogers hurriedly scrambled down from the brink.

"What is the matter?" asked Paul, when, rolling and slipping, they reached the bottom of the slope away from the lake. "I never saw anything so interesting in my life, and just as I was taking a picture of it Thursday hauled me away and tumbled me head-over-heels down the bank."

His father laughed. "I don't wonder you were surprised at such rough and unexpected treatment," he said. "But Thursday was only safeguarding your lives. The gases that rise with the vapor from the lake are very poisonous, and several strangers have been killed by inhaling them."

"Well, I'm glad we were not alone," said Harry. "Many thanks, Thursday, for pulling us away in time. I guess I got the picture all right anyway."

The native now led the way around the base of the hill and to a narrow cut or defile in the ridge which opened upon the lake's shore.

By the time the party reached this spot the boiling had almost ceased, and the lake was calm and tranquil in its bed, with a few wisps of steam rising slowly from its surface.

Here Thursday selected a sheltered spot within view of the lake, and opening his pack began preparing for a picnic in the crater.

From his pack-basket he drew chickens, pigeons

and other dainties, all carefully wrapped in green banana leaves. Scooping a shallow hole in the sand close to the lake's shore, he placed the various meats within and covered them with sand. Green plantains, slices of breadfruit, yams, and sweet potatoes were dropped into other holes; and several eggs, tied up in a rag, were suspended in the water at the edge of the lake. Meanwhile coffee was boiled in a tin pail placed over a tiny steam jet. Very soon the various edibles were dug out and spread upon fresh banana leaves, and the little party partook of a meal fit for a king, and all prepared in this marvelous fireless cooker provided by nature.

The boys were thoroughly enjoying the unique meal when Harry glanced toward the lake. Instantly he sprang to his feet, crying out: "Oh, look at the lake, it's all gone away."

All rose and stared toward the steaming pond. Not a drop of water or a sign of steam could be seen. Where the lake had bubbled and boiled a short time previously, there was merely a deep basin covered with a smooth coating of gray mud.

"Where in the world has it gone?" Paul asked at last. "It just seems to have vanished into thin air. I don't wonder these people believe in Jumbies if such queer things actually happen."

"It's not an unusual occurrence," replied Mr. Rogers. "But come along, boys; you now have

an opportunity that falls to few strangers who visit this lake. If Thursday thinks it's safe, we'll actually walk dryshod across the bottom of the famous Boiling Lake." Turning to their guide, he asked if it was safe to attempt the trip.

Thursday ran to the shores of the lake, stepped gingerly down into the muddy depression, listened with his ears close to the ground for a moment, and called to the others to follow him. There was no danger, he said.

Mr. Rogers and the boys lost no time in joining him, and in single file they walked over the soft, warm mud covering the bed of the lake, several inches thick. When about halfway across, Thursday called their attention to a circular opening near the center of the depression; and approaching it cautiously he beckoned the boys to come near. Bending forward, they looked down into a deep, well-like hole; and by listening intently they could hear a hissing, bubbling sound issuing from the depths.

This was the aperture through which all the boiling water issued, said the guide, and sometimes it came up with a rush and spouted many feet into the air in a gigantic scalding fountain. He assured them, however, that the approach of the water and steam was invariably presaged by loud roaring and rumbling. They had ample time to cross the bed to

the farther side and return, he said, and added that sometimes the lake subsided and the bed was left dry and bare for days or weeks at a time.

The bed of the lake was safely crossed, and the party walked about its edge and again regained their picnicking place.

"I'm glad we're safe back here again," said Paul as he resumed his interrupted lunch. "It gives me a sort of creepy feeling to walk over these places."

"I should be nervous myself if I didn't know how much one can depend upon the Laudat people who act as guides," said Mr. Rogers. "They've been accustomed to visiting this spot so often and know every inch of it so well that one is perfectly safe in trusting to them. The slightest hesitation or failure to obey their commands, or to take their advice, may result seriously, however. A few years ago a young Englishman lost his life right at this edge of the lake through disobeying his Laudat guide, and one of the natives who accompanied him was also killed in trying to save the young man."

"How did it happen?" asked Harry.

"The party were near where we're now seated," said Mr. Rogers, "but the lake was unusually active and a strong wind constantly blew puffs of steam in this direction. The Englishman was very anxious to approach closer; and scoffing at his guide's fears, and waiting until there was a lull in the wind and

the agitation had died down, he approached the shores of the lake.

“When within a few feet of the brink the lake suddenly boiled again, and a puff of wind enveloped the poor fellow in the poisonous vapors. He fell helpless to the ground, and one of the natives, seeing his plight, dashed bravely into the steam to save him. He also succumbed to the fumes before he even reached the body of the Englishman. For several days the lake was violently agitated, and nearly a week elapsed before the burned and discolored remains of the unfortunates were finally recovered.”

“Were those the only people ever killed here?” asked Paul.

“No, there have been several others, but I’ve only heard the facts about one. He was a native of Laudat who accompanied a party here. He lost his foothold and plunged headfirst into the lake while attempting to boil eggs in the water. His bones, from which the flesh had been boiled completely away, were found in the bed of the lake when it subsided a few days later.”

The meal was now over, and Thursday said it was time to be starting back toward Laudat. The bed of the lake still remained dry, and taking a last look at the strange place the boys followed Mr. Rogers and Thursday back across the crater, along the hot-water brook, over the floor of the first crater

and up the tortuous trail to the summit of the rim. At Laudat they stopped for a short rest and reached Roseau just as the sun went down.

"Did pirates ever attack Dominica?" asked Harry, whose mind was constantly reverting to his map, when the party was again upon the yacht's deck that evening.

"Not so far as I know," replied his uncle. "But there have been many stirring times here in olden days. The most important engagement which ever occurred between the British and French in the West Indies was fought to a finish off Dominica, and a large part of the terrific battle was witnessed by the inhabitants of Roseau. This took place on April 12, 1782, when Admiral Rodney attacked the French under De Grasse, and by defeating them settled the question of European sovereignty in the Lesser Antilles.

"Previously, however, there had been a constant struggle for supremacy between the two powers, and Dominica, like many of the other islands, had been captured, lost and recaptured repeatedly by both British and French.

"There was at one time a strong fortress on the Morne, where the Agricultural School now stands, and quite frequently old rusty cannon balls and arms are dug up in Roseau. But all the islands have had bloody histories, and if we're to stop at any of the

others we can't give any more time to Dominica, beautiful and interesting as it is."

As they sailed along under the lee of the towering Dominican cliffs the following morning, Mr. Rogers mentioned that it was a common belief among the natives that off each of these mountains there was a corresponding depth or hole in the bottom of the sea.

"There's some reason for the idea," he added, "for the water is exceedingly deep close to the shore in many places. At one point there's a hole over one thousand fathoms deep so near the shore that one may stand on the rocks and drop a line into it. The natives call it 'la bieme' or 'the deep,' and whenever a stranger crosses it for the first time he's saluted by the boatmen and baptized with the water, a sort of initiation like that accorded travelers crossing the equator by the sailors aboard ships."

The yacht was now approaching a little fishing village in a big grove of cocoanut palms, and Paul, who had been examining the shore through his glasses, suddenly exclaimed: "Do look there, father! Right off that little church by the shore, there are a lot of boys actually standing on top of the water."

Mr. Rogers raised his glasses and looked at the spot indicated and burst out laughing. "I'm not surprised that you thought they were standing on the water. In reality, they're on rafts. The queer

craft are made from a few sections of the trunk of a light, hollow tree known as the 'trumpet tree.' You can see them growing all over yonder hillside. Those broad silvery-white leaves show where they are. The natives call them 'hurricane trees,' for they think the leaves turning upside down indicate the approach of a hurricane. The wood is soft and as light as cork, and the rafts made from it are called 'Pipiris.' They're the favorite craft of the native boys, who paddle out on them to fish. Although they safely support the weight of their passengers, they're so low upon the water that their crews appear to be actually standing, sitting or walking on the waves."

"I should think they'd be wet and uncomfortable," said Harry.

"That doesn't bother the black boys," laughed Mr. Rogers. "They're innocent of clothing, or at most wear only an old shirt, and are as much at home in the water as upon the land."

A few moments later the *Cormorant* passed quite close to one of the queer rafts, and Harry and Paul gazed with interest at the black naked boy who squatted upon the frail structure and grinned up at the boys as they passed.

Paul flipped a coin toward the fishing boy. At the flash of silver in the sun the youngster leaped from his raft, plunged headfirst into the sea and in

another moment bobbed up with the shilling in his hand.

A few miles farther on the yacht passed beneath an enormous cliff that rose for a thousand feet sheer from the sea. "That's 'La Sourciere,' " Mr. Rogers said, "and just beneath it is the deep hole I mentioned. Beyond the next projecting cliff is Soufrière, and I'll head the yacht close inshore, so we'll have a good view of the place."

A few moments later the yacht rounded the rocky headland and entered the magnificent semicircular bay of Soufrière. Back of the smooth, sandy beach was the little village, shaded with nodding palms, and at one side the pretty church in a grove of flaming poincianas. Back of the village a vast circular valley swept up to the forested mountains, their summits among the clouds, and to the south the beach stretched in a crescent to a single outlying pinnacle of rock far out in the sea. "The valley was in reality the crater of an extinct volcano," Mr. Rogers said, "and the volcano merely slumbers, and is not dead, for back on the mountain sides there are great areas of sand where steam and hot water constantly issue from cracks and crevices, and even at the beach one may boil an egg by burying it a few inches deep in the sand."

"I should think people would be afraid to live in such a place," remarked Paul.

“Familiarity breeds contempt, you know,” said his father. “The people in Martinique felt perfectly safe in the shadow of Pelée merely because it hadn’t erupted in historical times; and in various parts of the world people dwell in fancied security in the vicinity of slumbering volcanoes. Soufrière may never again awake; but, on the other hand, it may be blown to dust some day. The greatest argument for its safety lies in the fact that while but fifteen miles distant from Martinique it showed no signs of activity during the eruption on that island. But we are now approaching the last point of Dominica, boys; so bid good-by to Soufrière and look ahead for your first glimpse of Martinique and devastating Morne Pelée.”

CHAPTER XIV

THE WHALER

As the *Cormorant* rounded lonely Scott's Head and began bobbing and pitching in the choppy seas of the channel between the islands, the boys peered toward the south, eager to catch their first glimpse of Martinique.

They had no difficulty in seeing it, for the day was clear and bright and across the narrow, white-capped strait Martinique loomed massive and plain, its lower slopes shimmering in opalescent tints, with Morne Pelée towering dark and frowning to the clouds.

In a little over an hour the *Cormorant* had crossed the channel, and under the lee of Martinique was once more sailing over a calm sea. Near at hand the long swells broke in snowy foam upon the beach, and from the shore the hills stretched away, soft and green, to the massive bulk of Pelée.

"That mountain doesn't look dangerous," said Paul at last. "I should never think it had caused such an enormous catastrophe if you hadn't told us."

“Shall we see the ruins of St. Pierre?” asked Harry.

“Yes, we’ll run close in to the shore before the ruined town,” replied Mr. Rogers, “but you’ll be disappointed in what you see, I fear. The ruins are covered with a growth of vegetation, and from the sea you would scarcely notice any signs of devastation. Already the hillsides are green, as you see, and yet after the eruption this whole side of the island was a desolate waste of mud, ashes and cinders. Nature hides her scars very rapidly in the tropics, and many people are again living above the ruins of their former homes about St. Pierre.”

“I thought everyone in St. Pierre was killed,” exclaimed Paul.

“For a long time the report *was* circulated that only one human being escaped destruction,” said Mr. Rogers. “This so-called ‘sole survivor’ was a negro criminal who was imprisoned in an underground dungeon; and he became quite famous, and earned a large sum of money as an exhibit with Barnum’s circus in the United States. Afterward he returned to Martinique, spent his little fortune in riotous living, and, if I’m not mistaken, finally died in jail as a common drunkard.

“As a matter of fact, however, he was not by any means the only resident of St. Pierre who escaped. Quite a number of refugees took to boats

and rafts, and several arrived safely in Dominica, and some of these are still living at Soufrière. Still others took to the woods and hills, and after days or weeks drifted into other towns and villages in Martinique.

“No one knows just how many human beings were killed in the eruption that destroyed the beautiful town, but there were many thousands, beyond a doubt, although the first estimates were probably greatly exaggerated. The whole affair was so sudden, so awful and so terrific, that even eye witnesses couldn’t give a connected account of what occurred. There were several vessels in the harbor; and while but one steamer escaped and made its way to St. Lucia, several persons on another ship were saved by taking refuge in a stateroom. Look ahead, now, and you’ll see what remains of the once busy and populous town.”

The *Cormorant* was now entering a large bay or roadstead, and along its shores the boys could plainly see broken and ruined walls, masses of tumbled masonry and great piles of débris, but so covered with vines, shrubs and other growth as to be robbed of all their grim aspect of death and devastation.

The boys were greatly disappointed, for, as Harry expressed it, they had expected to see “ruins that looked like Pompeii.” But as Paul said, “A boat

might sail past here and never know there'd been a town or eruption, as far as appearances go."

"It was quite different for a year or two after the eruption," said Mr. Rogers. "Then the ruined town stood forth in all its nakedness and the masses of mud and ash from the volcano covered the entire side of the island. Above all old Pelée smoked and muttered, and its frequent eruptions threw masses of red-hot sand and stones high in the air, and dense columns of smoke and steam poured from the crater and rolled above the hills or hung lowering over the ruins of the town."

Beyond St. Pierre the island became lower and more level, with fewer hills and mountains, until the *Cormorant* sailed into the deep landlocked bay, which forms the harbor of Fort de France, and dropped anchor off the pretty town on its level plain, with the green hills and distant mountains for a background.

The first impression of the visitors as they stepped ashore was one of neatness and "Frenchiness," for the streets were clean and well kept, the houses were tidy, and the innumerable men, women and children who thronged the streets and docks were dressed in clean, brightly colored clothes.

Mr. Rogers pointed out the various important buildings as the party strolled through the town, and calling the boys' attention to the cathedral, the

Bishop's palace, the arsenal and the extensive workshops of the Compagnie General Transatlantique. Then he led them to the central park or "Savane."

Here, in the center of a green square, surrounded by tamarind trees and palms, stood a magnificent statue of white marble.

"It's the Empress Josephine!" exclaimed Harry. "I'd know it anywhere, from the pictures I've seen."

"But the statue's far more beautiful than the pictures," added Paul.

"It's the finest monument in the West Indies," said Mr. Rogers, "and for poise and life-like attitude is equaled by few statues in the world."

"She actually seems to be gazing at something," remarked Harry. "See how her head's turned to one side and her eyes are fixed on some object across the bay."

"She's looking toward her birthplace," replied his uncle, "for the unfortunate Empress of France was born in a little hut on the estate of La Pagerie at Trois Islets on the other side of the harbor."

"I thought she was very wealthy and aristocratic," said Paul. "How did it happen that a girl born in a hut became the wife of Napoleon?"

"Her family *was* wealthy," explained his father. "And one of the most aristocratic creole families of Martinique. Shortly before the birth of Jose-

phine the La Pagerie home was destroyed by a hurricane, and the family took refuge in the house of an overseer. There the future Empress of the French was born, and afterward she lived in the sugar mill on the estate until she was fifteen years old. One may still see the ruins of the mill, as well as the church wherein Josephine was baptized, by visiting Trois Islets; but these few remaining objects which are associated with the life of the Empress are in bad condition and of comparatively little interest. It's far pleasanter to remember her by the splendid monument here in Fort de France."

As they turned from the "Savane" Mr. Rogers said, "Another monarch of a very different type also lived here in Fort de France. This was King Behanzin, the bloodthirsty potentate of Dahomey."

"How did he happen to come here?" asked Paul.

"He was banished from his country by the French," replied Mr. Rogers, "but instead of being punished, as he justly deserved, he was lionized and was visited by thousands of people. He had a large retinue of native followers and a number of his wives for company in his exile, and no doubt considered his banishment as a very enjoyable experience. Eventually he was sent back to Africa, bag and baggage, and doubtless told very entertaining stories about his life in Martinique."

The boys, anxious to see something of the in-

terior of the island, suggested a walk along the well kept roads that led from the town. Mr. Rogers, however, considering a carriage more desirable, secured a conveyance with a mulatto driver who spoke English.

In the immediate vicinity of the town the boys found little of interest, for the country was level and thoroughly cultivated, but as they crossed the bamboo-fringed river and reached the foothills they were charmed with the luxuriant vegetation and the views which each turn of the road revealed.

At one spot they stopped and looked back upon the panorama of the valley, with its town bounded by the two rivers. These, their driver told them, were known as "Mr. River" and "Mrs. River," a literal translation of their French names, "Riviere Madame" and "Riviere Monsieur." Beyond the town and the harbor they could see the massive, gray fortress, and at one glance they could take in both the birthplace of Josephine and her white statue gleaming among its encircling palms in the center of the town.

As the road passed through a deep shady glen the horse suddenly shied, almost overturning the carriage, and then stood trembling and snorting. The driver sprang from his seat, whip in hand, and stepping cautiously forward struck viciously at some object by the roadside.



They crossed the bamboo-fringed river

“What was it?” cried both boys, running forward to where the negro stood peering into the weeds.

“Ze Fer de Lance, M’sieus,” replied the driver. Reaching into the brush with a stick, he pulled forth a dull, coppery-brown serpent nearly four feet in length.

“Why, it’s just an ordinary snake,” exclaimed Paul.

“A snake, yes,” remarked Mr. Rogers, who had joined the others by the roadside, “but not an ordinary snake, by any means. That’s the dreaded Fer de Lance or spear-headed snake, one of the most deadly of all poisonous serpents known.”

“I didn’t know there were poisonous snakes in the West Indies,” said Harry in surprise.

“In most of the islands there are none,” said his uncle, “but in Martinique and St. Lucia the Fer de Lance is abundant. It’s not a native, but belongs naturally in South America. In the early days it was introduced in the islands with the idea of preventing the slaves from running away, but it proved far more dangerous to the whites than to the slaves. A great proportion of the reptiles were destroyed during the eruption, but before the destruction of St. Pierre it was unsafe to stir abroad outside the city after nightfall; and numerous persons were bitten by the Fer de Lance in the public gardens within the city limits.”

“Is their bite fatal?” asked Harry.

“Almost always,” replied Mr. Rogers. “But fortunately the Fer de Lance is a slow and rather sluggish snake. On the other hand, it bites without warning or provocation, and as the majority of the natives go about barefooted it finds many victims.”

“Can nothing be done to destroy the snakes?” asked Paul.

“Yes. In St. Lucia the introduction of the East Indian Mongoose, a small animal related to the weasels, resulted in the destruction of vast numbers of the Fer de Lance. Unfortunately, however, the Mongoose relishes birds, chickens and other creatures fully as well as it likes snakes, and it has proved a great nuisance. In Jamaica and other islands where the animal has been introduced to destroy rats it has caused immense losses to poultry raisers, and it’s somewhat doubtful if the mongoose is any great improvement over the snakes and rats it destroys.”

“Are there no natural enemies of the Fer de Lance?” asked Harry as the party reëntered the carriage and the driver strove to quiet the still trembling horse.

“Not in Martinique,” replied his uncle, “but in St. Lucia there’s a small blue-black snake with a

white belly, known as the cribo, which is an inveterate enemy of the Fer de Lance."

Early the following morning the yacht passed out through the harbor entrance and headed southward along the coast.

Suddenly Paul, who had been watching the shores, exclaimed: "Why, we forgot all about looking for the treasure on Martinique, Harry."

"You needn't worry," said his father, who stood near. "There's no place that corresponds to your map on Martinique, and even if the treasure had been buried there it would long ago have been found, for the windward side of Martinique is not a wild, uninhabited coast such as exists on many other islands."

"I'm afraid we'll pass all the islands without finding where the pirate treasure was hidden," sighed Harry.

"There's no telling," said Mr. Rogers. "But, seriously, if the map really refers to any of these Lesser Antilles, it probably indicates a spot on some small key or on one of the Grenadines."

"Shall we visit the Grenadines?" asked Paul.

"I hadn't planned to," replied his father. "It would cost a great deal of time. The islands have little of real interest and they are out of our course to Barbados. St. Vincent is the most southerly island I expected to visit. But look ahead. Do

you see that dim outline rising from the sea a short distance off the shore?"

"Surely," answered Harry. "It appears to be a rock or peak rising from the water."

"What do you make of it, Paul?" asked Mr. Rogers, smiling.

"I think it's a rock, as Harry said," replied Paul after a study through his glasses.

"You would be surprised if I told you 'twas a British ship-of-war, would you not?" asked Mr. Rogers.

"It doesn't look a bit like a ship," replied Harry. "But, after thinking Sail-Rock was a vessel, I can almost believe that we might be fooled the other way round."

"You're not mistaken in thinking this is a rock," said Mr. Rogers. "Nevertheless, it was once a warship."

"How on earth could that be?" asked Paul incredulously.

"It came about in a peculiar way," replied his father. "During the wars of the eighteenth century the rock, which was called 'Diamond Rock,' was seized and fortified by a British admiral, who sent sailors up its steep sides to the summit, where they mounted several guns and stored provisions. A crew was left to man the cannon, and whenever a French vessel approached she was greeted with

a fusillade of shot. Time after time the French endeavored to dislodge or capture the little garrison, but without avail, until at last their slender store of food gave out and they were obliged to surrender. So gallant was the defense carried out and so famous did the rock become that it was actually entered on the British Admiralty lists as 'H. M. Sloop-of-War Diamond Rock.' "

Soon after passing Diamond Rock the dim outlines of St. Lucia were seen, and as the boys gazed steadily toward this new land they were roused by a cry from Pete, who was helping one of the crew in the rigging.

"What is it, Pete?" called Mr. Rogers.

"It look lak a ship afire, Sir," answered the black boy. "Look-a to tha' odder side, Sir, an' yo'll see it. He mek plenty smoke fo' surely."

Mr. Rogers hurried to the starboard rail, and fixed his glasses on a column of black smoke which was drifting lazily above the horizon.

"I think it's merely a steamer," he replied to the boys' inquiries, after studying it a moment. Turning to Tom, he said: "Take my glasses and go aloft and see what you make of it."

The sailor ran nimbly up the shrouds, put the glasses to his eyes and immediately called down: "It's no steamer, Sir. I can make out her masts.

She's a square-rigger and seems to be afire amidships, Sir."

"Very well, Tom," replied Mr. Rogers. "Keep a sharp watch for boats or signals. Start the motor, Paul, and get all the speed you can." Then, turning to the helmsman, he ordered the *Cormorant* headed toward the column of smoke.

Presently Tom called down that he could see boats about the burning ship, and a moment later he added that signals were flying from the masthead.

"Read them off," ordered Mr. Rogers. As Tom called down the color and design of each flag, Harry looked through the signal code book and announced: "She signals that she wants us to come alongside."

"Run up the answering pennant, Harry," said Mr. Rogers. "And signal that we're coming with assistance."

The masts of the smoking ship were now plainly visible, and in a few moments her hull showed above the horizon. The *Cormorant* was plowing swiftly through the long ocean swell with every stitch of canvas swelling to the trade wind and her powerful motor throbbing under full power. Suddenly Tom burst into a roar of laughter, and shouted down:

"She's not afire, Sir. She's a whaler a-tryin' out blubber."

"To be sure!" exclaimed Mr. Rogers. "I wonder it didn't occur to us before." Turning to the ex-

pectant boys, he said: "Well, the joke's on us, but as we're so near and her captain wishes to speak to us, we'll run alongside, and you boys can have an opportunity of seeing a whaler at work. Run down and shut off the power, Paul. There's no need to hurry now."

Tom descended from the rigging, sail was shortened and the yacht sailed leisurely on toward the black bark, which was now but a mile or so distant, her weed-grown, dingy sides showing plainly as she rose and fell sluggishly to the long swells.

As they drew near the boys had a good opportunity to view the first whaling ship they had ever seen. She was bluff-bowed, lofty, wall-sided, and dingy. Her anchor chains were thick with rust, which had run down beneath her hawse-holes and had left brown streaks upon her planking, and her bilges were covered with a dense growth of green, slimy weeds. Her ropes and rigging were frayed, spliced and gray, and her lofty spars were weather-beaten and begrimed with smoke, while her sails were loosely and carelessly stowed, and her huge topsails, set "aback" to keep her to the wind, were dark and patched in innumerable places. She looked, as Paul put it, "like the ship of the Ancient Mariner."

Interesting as was the ship herself, the boys' attention was instantly diverted from her when they

caught sight of the great livid carcass of a whale secured to the vessel's side. Standing upon it and working diligently were a half dozen men armed with long-handled implements, with which they chopped and hacked at the mass of flesh beneath their feet. Above them, at the ship's rail, stood two swarthy fellows manning a rope and tackle from a yard-arm overhead, and every few seconds a huge slab of dripping blubber was hoisted from the carcass to the deck. Over all hung a thick pall of dark smoke, and though the yacht was to windward yet, the air was full of the rank odor of whale oil and burning flesh.

As the *Cormorant* rounded to near the whaler and lost headway, a stoop-shouldered, thick-set man, clad in undershirt and overalls, and with a battered palm-leaf hat on his gray head, climbed onto the rail. Flourishing an arm, he shouted something at the party on the yacht.

At first his words were unintelligible above the racket of the men hoisting the blubber, and the creaking of the yards as the ship rolled. Cupping his hands, the old man tried again. "Ain't seen nothin' of a whaleboat driftin' about, have ye?" he bellowed.

"No. We've only come from Martinique since daylight," shouted Mr. Rogers through a megaphone. "Have you lost a boat?"

"Yep," answered the whaler, and, as an after-thought, "kin ye come aboard? Glad to hev ye visit fer a spell."

"Oh, do let us go, Uncle Charles!" begged Harry.

"Won't it be great fun!" said Paul.

"Very well," called Mr. Rogers, after a moment's thought. "Throw us a line, and we'll drop astern."

With a nod of his head the whaler jumped from the rail to the deck, and the *Cormorant* swung round and luffed up a few rods from the bark's counter. As the boys caught sight of the broad, weather-beaten stern they burst out laughing; for in big white letters they read: "*Gazelle*, New Bedford."

"Of all the names!" exclaimed Paul.

"'Hippopotamus' would be better," laughed Harry.

Hardly had the yacht lost headway when a man sprang onto the after-rail of the bark, and a coil of rope came singing through the air to the *Cormorant's* deck. Tom and Pete immediately seized it and made it fast.

"They certainly know how to cast lines like real sailors," said Paul as the boys and Mr. Rogers stepped into the dinghey.

"They *are* real sailors," said Mr. Rogers, "and the best sailors in the world, despite the appearance of their ships. Don't judge them by that, my boy. If you knew all that old bark has been through

since last she saw a port or a drydock, no doubt you would wonder that she looks as good as she does. But here we are alongside. If the captain is a true New England whaler of the old school, as I suspect, you boys will hear and see some interesting things before you leave his ship."

A pilot's ladder had been lowered over the bark's side, and the boys followed Mr. Rogers as he climbed up this to the deck.

"Welcome aboard," cried the gray-headed whaler, meeting the visitors at the rail. "My name's Lapham, Cap'n Jacob Lapham, an' I'm right glad to meet ye."

Mr. Rogers introduced himself and the two boys, explaining that they were cruising to Barbados. "I'm very glad to meet you, Captain Lapham," he said, "and the boys, I know, are pleased to be aboard a whaler. They've never seen a whaling ship before, much less one actually engaged in trying out oil."

"Lor' bless ye, where be ye frum?" cried the Captain, clapping the boys on their shoulders. "Frum *Noo* York, be ye! Wall, do ye know it 'pears mighty *pe*-culiar to me that two youngers like ye ain't never seed a whaler afore, but I'll be boun' ye'll think it jist as funny that a ol' whaleman o' my age, sixty-eight years come March, ain't never set foot in *Noo* York. No, sir; been to sea, man an' boy, since I was

knee-high to a grasshopper, an' never seed yer *Metropolis* yit."

"That's strange," said Mr. Rogers. "I should have imagined that on some of your many cruises you would have sailed from or landed at New York."

"Wall, atter all, 'taint so everlastin' strange," ruminated the Captain. "Ye see, whalin' ain't like other sailerin'. When a whalin' man gits hum arter a three o' four years' cruise he mos' gin'rally gits purty well plum-gasted tired o' sailin' an's mighty glad fer to sittle down an hoe 'taters fer a spell. That's how 'tis with me, at any rate. I'm frum Nantucket myself, but bin a sailin' out o' New Bedford, Block Island an' New London o' late years, an' when I gits hum I'm tarnation glad ter jest sit aroun' an' visit with ther folks to hum fer a spell. Don't never seem ter git ther time ter see *Noo York*."

"I suppose you do get tired of traveling after such long voyages," remarked Mr. Rogers.

"Yes, sir. An' whalin' ain't what it uster be, neither. Why, I kin recolleck when a eight months' cruise filled us up ter ther hatches, an' naow, if we git a hunderd bar'ls a year, we're doin' purty well. But here I'm a standin' a blowin' an' splutterin' like a bloomin' grampus when you younkens is jist a itchin' ter see the sights. Come along, lads, an' I'll do ther honors an' show ye about."

The boys followed the Captain toward the forward part of the ship, stepping over and about coils of rope, piles of barrel staves and other odds and ends.

“Ye won’t find ther old hooker dressed up in her best bib an’ tucker, lads,” said the skipper. “She ain’t jest shipshape fer inspection. Kind o’ sloppy an’ mussed up, but what with two fish ter onc’t an’ a losin’ of a boat an’ crew we’re a bit short handed an’ boun’ to git things messed erbout.”

They had now reached the waist of the ship, and the boys looked upon a busy scene. Near the break of the deck was a rude brick fireplace, and on this were two enormous iron kettles, into which the men were throwing square chunks of blubber, while a half-naked negro fed the roaring fires with what Harry called “the rind of the blubber.” From the kettles a cloud of odorous blue vapor arose, while the burning fat and flesh sent a tumbling, rolling cloud of dense black smoke drifting off to the distant horizon to leeward. Coopers were busy hooping casks together to receive the oil from the kettles, or heading up those already filled, and as fast as these were ready they were lowered by block and tackle into the open hatch to the hold.

The din was deafening, and on every side the men sweated, swore and sang at their labors. All were so begrimed with smoke, so reeking with grease and

oil, and so tanned and unkempt that the boys could not tell whether they were black, brown, or white.

"You say you lost a boat," said Mr. Rogers. "How and when did it happen?"

"Three days past; 'bout ten miles to looward o' Aves. Ye see, Portugee Joe's boat made a strike jes' afore sundown. Struck a rappin' big bull, an' when he felt their iron off he sot like a steam engine to'rds ther equator, with Joe a' trailin' along like er pesky motor boat. No wind ter speak of an' by ther time we wore araound to foller of him up he was hull daown an' night er comin' on. Stood arter him all night a burning flares, but I reckon he must 'a' been staved in or made fer one o' ther islan's, fer we ain't seen hide ner hair o' him since. Thought mebbe yer might hev sighted him or heerd of him in ther islan's. So I spoke ye."

"No, we have seen or heard nothing of the boat," replied Mr. Rogers.

Then he told how the whaler had been mistaken for a ship on fire and in distress. At this tale the Captain roared with hearty laughter and vowed it the funniest story and the best joke he had heard in years.

The boys had been intently watching every operation on the deck about them. Now they noticed a great ladle or bucket drawn over the ship's side, from which a thick yellowish liquid was poured care-

fully into waiting casks, and they asked the Captain what it contained.

“Lor’ bless ye,” he cried. “Here I am fergettin’ agin to show you boys ther sights. That’s spermaceti, lads. Come over to the rail and ye’ll see the men a bailin’ of it frum ther case alongside.”

Reaching the rail, the boys peered over it and saw that the enormous head of the whale had been severed from the body and was slung by ropes and tackle against the side of the ship, with one end almost level with the deck. On a plank staging beside it two men stood dipping the yellow liquid from a cavity in the head.

“Yon hole’s what we call ther case,” explained the skipper. “When the critter’s alive, or while he’s fresh, the spermaceti’s like thick ile, but arter it’s in the casks and gits cold it grows hard like wax. It’s a sight more valerble than the blubber, an’ ye can bet we take good care not ter waste it.”

“Is the spermaceti and oil all that you get from the whales?” asked Paul.

“Them’s ther most valerble things,” replied the Captain. “But sometimes we gits ambergris, and nowadays we saves the teeth. Time was when the teeth weren’t no good, ’cept as curios ter take hum ter ther folks, but nowadays they brings a leetle profit fer the iv’ry.”

“Why, I didn’t know whales had teeth,” ex-

claimed Harry. "I thought they had whalebone, through which they strained the water in order to secure small animals upon which they feed."

"Lor' bless ye," chuckled the Captain. "Them's right-whales yer a thinkin' on. Some calls 'em Greenland whales or bowheads. Ye find 'em in cold water, mostly 'round the arctic and antarctic, 'though there's one kind, called the Biscay whale, what's found in temp'rate waters. These chaps we got erlongside is sperm whales, an' a diff'runt sort er fish *entirely*. Sperm whales don't have no whalebone, but they've got good sure 'nough teeth, all right. I'll show yer some when we goes below."

"What do the sperm whales eat?" asked Harry.

"What is the ambergris?" asked Paul.

"Sperm whales eat fish an' other critters," explained the skipper. "They dives fur 'em to the bottom. They're mighty fond o' big cuttle-fish or squid an' that answers yer remark abaout ambergris. That's a sort o' gray, sweet-smellin' stuff what grows in ther sperm whale's innards. It's made by ther whale's a swallerin too many cuttles, beaks an' all, an' when a lot o' it gits in the critter's insides it makes him sick an' he spits it up. Sometimes we find it a floatin' abaout on the water or cast ashore on ther beach, an' sometimes we find it inside the critters when we cuts em open."

"Is it valuable?" asked Harry.

"Ye bet 'tis that," replied the Captain. "It's used in makin' of *perfum'ry* an's wuth its weight in gold. I tell *ye* a whaler what gits a good lump o' ambergris don' need to go a-cruisin' no more. He kin jes sittle daown an' raise chickens and pertaters the rest o' his days."

"You speak of whales as 'fish,' Captain Lap-ham," said Paul. "I always thought whales were mammals and warm-blooded."

"So they be," replied the Captain. "We *calls* 'em fish, but they ain't no more reel fish than I be. They suckles their calves like reg'lar shore critters, an' I tell *ye* it's a purty sight ter see a big cow-whale a-lyin' on her side an' a nussin' of her calf or a lettin' it play araound her like a old bossy with her younker."

"How long have you been on this cruise?" asked Mr. Rogers.

"Nineteen months, come nex' Friday," replied the skipper.

"Then I suppose you'll soon go to the station boat at Dominica to discharge and refit," said Mr. Rogers.

"No, siree," replied the Captain. "This 'ere's a private owned bark. Me an' Hank Grayson owns her, share and share alike, an' when we're full up, which I hopes will be moughty soon, we sets sail fer ol' New Bedford. Them station boats *belongs* ter

ther comp'ny, an' they's put a reef in our sails, *I* tell ye. Mos' of 'em carries Portugee or Kanaka crews an' Portugee skippers, an' while I ain't got nothin' agin' the Portugees, fer they're sure good sailormen, they work too consarn cheap an' eats too poor tucker fer enny Yankee skipper ter *compete* with 'em. Yes, siree, them's what's druv the ol' Yankee skipper whalers offen the sea a'most—they an' the steam whalers, an' the harpoon guns and bumb lances an' newfangled contraptions. But come er-long below an' set down where it's cool an' a leetle less smelly an' mussed up."

So saying, he led the way aft and down the companionway, and the boys gazed about in surprise at the sudden change from the dirty, ill-smelling, greasy deck to the neat, clean, comfortable cabin.

The little room into which the companionway led was twelve or fifteen feet in length, and was carpeted with oilcloth and old New England rag rugs. In the center the polished shaft of the mizzen-mast passed from floor to ceiling, and a hanging lamp swung from the deck-beams above. A rack about the mast contained charts, papers, writing materials and other articles. A table and chairs stood in the center of the room, and cushioned benches were built against the forward bulkhead. Everything was spotlessly clean, and a great windsail brought a fresh current of air from far aloft into the skylight

of the cabin. In a brass cage a tame mocking bird sang melodiously, and on a rack beneath the skylight was a box filled with blooming geraniums and heliotrope.

"Set daown, set daown an' make yerselves ter hum," cried the Captain genially as the boys stood gazing about. "Ye see the old *Gazelle* ain't sech a pesky ol' wrack as ye'd think, arter all. Quite humlike an' comfy I calls it."

"It certainly *is* nice," said Harry, seating himself in a comfortable chair.

"Yep, I had it all fixed up fer ther Missus ter come along, but her rumatiz was kind er bad an' she *decided* not ter go this cruise. Not that I don't like things a bit tidy below decks myself, mind ye; an' I mos' ginrally keep ther cabin shipshape an' Bristol-fashion."

"Is this the only cabin?" asked Paul.

"This 'ere's the *saloon*, lad," replied the skipper, laughing. "Likewise the *dinin'-room* an' *chart-house*, as well as the *arm'ry*, the *smokin'-room* an' *settin'-room*. The crew an' han's bunks forrard an' eats on deck or in the fo'ksle, but me an' the mates eats here and bunks in the cabins yonder." He stepped to one side, opened a door and revealed a small but comfortable stateroom.

"I told you, lads, I'd show ye some whales' teeth, so *excuse* me a minnit an' I'll git 'em fer ye." The

skipper stepped into his room and presently returned bearing a canvas bag, the contents of which, dumped onto the table, were a number of huge, sharp-pointed, yellowish-white, conical teeth.

"My! but they *are* big," exclaimed Harry. "What a bite a whale could give with them."

"They only grows on the bottom jaws," explained the Captain. "Take yer pick, lads, an' stuff 'em in yer pockets as *sooveeneers* of yer visit."

"Thank you ever so much," exclaimed both boys. "We certainly *will* remember our visit, Captain."

"Years agone," mused the Captain, "whaler men passed time by a carvin' o' the teeth. Sometimes they scratched 'em in picters and rubbed in soot an' color an' the teeth looked reel nice an' purty. 'Scrimshawin' ' they called it. I do b'leeve I've got a few o' them scrimshawed teeth 'round yit. I'll look a bit an' see, an' while I'm a pokin' abaout ye kin come erlong in the room. Mos' likely as not ye'll find som'thin' to int'res' ye."

The boys entered his little cabin. To them it was a wonderland, for on shelves and racks, under the bunk, and hung on the walls, was a wonderful collection of curious things from every quarter of the globe. Beautiful sea-shells, delicate corals, rare "glass sponges" from Japan, South Sea Island war-clubs, bows, arrows and spears; feather-girdles, sharks' jaws, swords from swordfish and saws from

sawfish, and innumerable other strange objects were there, and several paintings of famous whaling ships hung above the bunk.

Finally the old Captain, who had been poking about in a sea-chest, got to his feet puffing. "Thar, I knowed I had 'em som'ers. Here they be, one fer each o' ye, an' I'm right sorry I ain't got more, but I've give 'em away t' folks to hum." As he spoke he handed the boys two teeth, and Harry and Paul, after thanking him, hurried to show the teeth to Mr. Rogers.

"You must have seen a great deal of the world and must have had many narrow escapes and exciting experiences in your life," said Mr. Rogers, admiring the handsomely carved and decorated teeth.

"I hev seen a sight o' places fust an' last, an' I hev been in some tight places, but whalin' ain't so risky as folks mos' ginrally think."

"Have you been to the Arctic?" asked Paul.

"Lor' bless ye, yes!" laughed the Captain. "Years an' years I was a whalin' in Hudson's Bay an' Baffin Bay afore the bowheads got so pesky skeerce it didn' pay ter hunt 'em. Many an' many a time I've bin friz up in the ice with floes a squeezin' of the old hooker until her deck planks riz above the bul'arks.

"But the Ar'tic ain't so bad. The Antar'tic 's

the wuss by a long sight. I mind onct I was down ter Desolation,—Kerguelen Islan' mos' folks call it. I was mate o' the ol' *Ruby* then an' hed charge o' a party what landed on Desolation with six months' grub an' outfit. We wuz to stop ashore an' hunt seals an' sea-elephants, an' the ol' *Ruby* wuz to call atter us in four months at the latest. Wall, the consarned ol' tub sprung a leak an' put into Cape Town an' her crew desarted, an', b'lieve *me*, 'twas eighteen mortal months we wuz a livin' on that God-forsaken islan'."

"Why, I should think you'd have starved to death," exclaimed Paul. "What on earth did you live on?"

"Wall, whalers is purty tough critters," laughed the Captain, "an not too partic'lar what they eats, 'spesh'ly when they's left short o' grub on a *on*-inhabited islan' in ther Antar'tic. We grubbed offen penguins' an' albatross' eggs an' shell-fish mostly, but I tell *ye* we wuz on purty slim rations durin' the winter. Wall, the *Ruby* showed up at las' an' I do b'leeve the ol' tub wuz ther purtiest lookin' ship I ever seen when she dropped her mud-hook offen the beach where we had our shanty."

"Did you ever see any pirates?" asked Harry.

"Or find a hidden treasure?" put in Paul.

"Wall, I can't say as how I ever met up with any reel, ol'-fashion', story-book pirates," answered the

skipper, "but I onc't got chased by Malay pirates, an' offen the Iv'ry Coast we onc't had a bit o' a set-to with natives. I can't say as how I ever ran acrost any buried treasure but just onc't, though."

"Please tell us about it," cried both boys.

"Wall, 'tain't much of a story," chuckled the Captain. "It happened over in ther South Pacific. I wuz a young feller then an' boat steerer, an' our boat got fast to a bull whale an' towed out o' sight o' the ship, jus' like Portugee Joe did. We cut the line when we see we'd los' the ship, an' headed fer a leetle atoll we see on the horizon. It wuz a right purty place, all white san' an' palms, but no natives an' no water. We sot up a flag on a palm tree an' built a smoke to let the ship know where we wuz, an' commenced to hunt fer grub. We wuz all purty nigh starved when I run acrost the buried treasure an' I tell *ye* it *wuz* a treasure to us chaps, all poor whalin' men."

"How much was there?" asked Harry excitedly.

"Was it money or jewels?" cried Paul.

"I reckon 'twas more like joowels than money," said the captain thoughtfully. "I don' remember *egzactly* how many there wuz, but they was a plenty to feed us chaps until the ol' bark cum along. Ye see the treasure *I* run acrost wuz a turtle's nest full o' fresh aiggs."

The boys laughed, and then they told the Captain

about Harry's adventure and the pirate's map. The old man was deeply interested and asked to see the copy of the map.

He spread it on the table, pored over it intently and getting down a number of charts, compared them with Harry's paper.

"Wall, wall," he announced at last, "there ain't no doubt this 'ere's a gen-uine pirate's chart, an' I reckon the ol' cuss reely had treasure hid away. Now I know most of ther keys an' islan's hereabouts, an' frum this paper an' what I know I should say as how this 'ere place wuz mos' likely one of ther Bahamas or some key over yonder in ther Gulf o' Mexico. They's a heap o' little keys all erlong the Central American coast, an' a lot o' them *onin*-habited, an' in ol' times they uster be a great place fer pirates ter hang out."

"Why do you think it's a cay in the Gulf or one of the Bahamas?" asked Harry.

"Wall, it ain't one er these 'ere Looward Islan's, at enny rate," replied the Captain. Running a stubby forefinger along the map, he continued: "Ye see it's this a-way. This 'ere map says as how there's good anchorage in this 'ere bay, an' this bay's to wind'ard. Now if this bay was to the wind'-ard-side o' these Looward Islan's there couldn't be no good harbor there. Accordin' to yer map, there ain't no shelter frum the trade wind, an' so accordin'

to my opinion there can't be no trade wind a blowin' on that bay, an' the only keys I knows of what don't have the trades on ther wind'ard sides down hereabouts are some o' the Bahamas an' the keys over by ther Gulf Coast. O' course this 'ere bay mebbe on a little islan' clost to the loo'ard o' some big islan' what cuts off the wind, but mos' likely if that wuz so they'd a given bearin's fer the main islan', or leastwise mentioned it."

"That shows how important 'tis to have a sailor's knowledge of such matters," remarked Mr. Rogers. "It would never have occurred to any of us to reason that out and yet I thought we were by no means green landsmen."

"Well, there isn't much use of our hunting about these islands down here," remarked Paul, "but, after all, even if we don't get the treasure, we've had a fine trip."

"That's true," agreed Harry, "but still we *may* find an island with a key behind it such as Captain Lapham describes."

Time had passed rapidly aboard the whaler, and Mr. Rogers announced that they must leave if they were to reach St. Lucia before nightfall.

When the party reached the yacht, Mr. Rogers sent Tom and Pete back to the bark with a great bundle of magazines and papers and a box of cigars.

Then casting off the line which held them to the

whaler's stern, and with a last farewell to the genial Captain, the yacht dropped away, and a moment later was again headed toward distant St. Lucia and the southward.

CHAPTER XV

THE SQUALL

It was late in the afternoon when the *Cormorant* entered the narrow entrance of Castries harbor, and passing between the old forts on Vigie Head and Coccoanut Headlands cast anchor off the great naval and coaling station. The town looked very pretty and inviting against its background of green hills, but Mr. Rogers assured the boys that it was really a most unhealthy spot and that it was unsafe for any northerner to visit it after nightfall.

“After dark,” he continued, “the town is almost deserted and has been likened to a cemetery because it’s so lonesome. All the better class of people dwell on the hills behind the town, especially on Morne Fortuné, a hill about a mile inland, where, 800 feet above the sea, the air is cool and healthy. You can see it from where you stand, that green, lofty hill with the flag flying above it. The large building is the Government House, and when the island was strongly garrisoned the troops were also stationed there.”

The boys had been looking at various parts of

the town and its surroundings through their glasses. As Mr. Rogers ceased speaking, Harry asked: "What are all those women carrying on their heads to that great steamer at the dock? There seems to be a constant procession going up and down the gang-planks."

"They're coaling the ship," said his uncle, "and are carrying the coal on their heads. It seems to us a primitive and slow method, but as a matter of fact they are able to load the bunkers at the rate of 140 tons an hour."

"The coal dock seems the biggest thing here," remarked Paul as he watched the strange, never-ending procession of women.

"So it is," replied Mr. Rogers. "Castries really owes its existence to the fact that it's a naval and coaling station. It has such a splendid almost land-locked harbor that it affords unusual facilities for such a station, and its narrow entrance is so strongly fortified that it's sometimes called the 'Gibraltar of the West Indies.' "

"Do we go ashore in the morning?" asked Harry.

"No," replied Mr. Rogers. "As soon as I get a supply of gasoline I'll run down the coast to Soufrière to spend the night, for Castries is a disagreeable, ill-smelling and unhealthy spot in which to lie, and you'll find Soufrière far more interesting."

Very soon the customs boat had visited and left

the yacht, Mr. Rogers received his supply of fuel for the motor, and hoisting anchor the yacht passed out through the entrance to the harbor and headed down the coast.

The sun was setting when the boys first caught sight of the Pitons which mark the entrance to Soufrière harbor. Like two great pyramids the Pitons rose almost sheer from the sea, their rocky summits wreathed with rose-colored clouds, and their rocky sides gleaming like molten metal in the rays of the setting sun.

As the yacht drew closer the Pitons appeared to lean toward the little craft, and seemed about to topple over as the boys gazed upward to their sharp summits.

"How high are those great rocks?" asked Harry. "They look about a mile to me."

Mr. Rogers laughed. "They do *look* high," he replied, "but they're really only 2,460 and 2,620 feet above the sea. The larger is known as the 'Grand Piton' and the other as 'Little Piton.' They've been likened to 'Dragons' Teeth' by some writers, but sailors commonly call them the 'Donkey's Ears.' "

"Has anyone ever climbed to their summits?" asked Paul.

"For many years no one succeeded in accomplishing the feat," replied Mr. Rogers. "The first to



“What are all those women carrying on their heads?”

succeed was a British sailor, who with two companions attempted to scale the Grand Piton. Two of the party were killed by the Fer de Lance before the summit was reached and the third expired as he reached the top and shouted victory. A Mr. Lompré reached the top of the Little Piton in 1878 and Chief Justice Carrington and several others have since ascended it."

The yacht now entered the passage between the pinnacles, and cast anchor in the harbor of Soufrière.

It was too late to go ashore that night, but after breakfast the following day the party landed, strolled through the pretty little town, and engaging a guide and carriage drove to the Sulphur Springs from which Soufrière derives its name.

They found the St. Lucia Soufrière merely a large area coated with a thin crust containing sulphur crystals and alum, through which jets of steam and springs of boiling water issued.

"Why, it's just like some parts of the Boiling Lake crater," cried Paul.

"But it's very uninteresting and small compared to the Boiling Lake," said Harry.

"I agree with you," said Mr. Rogers, "but it's worth seeing, for it's noted for its curative waters throughout the islands. As early as 1784 sulphur baths were established here by the French, and

many people visit the spot each year to take the baths, which are said to afford great relief from rheumatism and other afflictions."

"Was St. Lucia French at one time?" asked Paul.

"Certainly," replied his father. "The people and numerous localities still bear French names, and Patois is the language of the common people, as it is in Dominica, St. Vincent, Grenada and to some extent in Trinidad; but in the last Spanish is quite generally understood, and the Patois contains many Spanish words. The strangest of all the island dialects is that of Curaçao, a Dutch island off the coast of Venezuela. The people there speak what is known as 'Papiamento,' which is composed of Dutch, Indian, English, French and Spanish. Stranger yet, although this language is such a perfect hodge-podge of tongues, it has its own grammar and dictionary."

"After learning it a person could speak 'most anything, I should think," said Harry.

"You'd find it comparatively easy," replied his uncle. "The Patois of these other islands is much harder, and luckily it's not necessary to learn either, for nowadays a knowledge of English and Spanish will carry the traveler through almost any part of America."

Early in the afternoon the *Cormorant* left St. Lucia astern, resuming her ever southward course toward St. Vincent, twenty-five miles away.

An hour after leaving port, and just as the dim outlines of St. Vincent became visible, the wind suddenly fell and the sails flapped idly against the masts as the little yacht rolled slowly to the long swell from the Atlantic. Mr. Rogers scanned the horizon anxiously and examined the barometer, then gave orders to start the motor.

"I don't like this," he said to Harry. "It's unusual for the wind to drop in this way, and yet the barometer shows no sign of a storm. I think we'll shorten sail, at any rate, and be ready for whatever comes."

He called to the sailors, and all hands began lowering and stowing the big mainsail, while Pete held the yacht on her course under power.

They were busy at their task when a frightened shout from Pete interrupted them, and Mr. Rogers with a single glance to windward rushed aft, whirled the wheel over and swung the head of the *Cormorant* toward the east.

The cause of Pete's cry and Mr. Rogers' action was instantly evident to all, for less than half a mile distant a solid wall of white blotted out the horizon and the sky. Above it was a mass of scurrying inky clouds, at its base a seething mass of foam, and the whole was bearing down on the yacht with the speed of an express train.

Aboard the *Cormorant* all was hurry and com-

motion. Orders were shouted to lash everything fast, hatches and skylights were rapidly banged shut and bolted, and the few remaining sails were hastily lowered and furled. The work was but half completed when Mr. Rogers shouted to the boys to hold fast and Tom sprang to the other side of the wheel.

The next instant, with a deafening roar, the squall was upon them; and with the first onslaught of the howling gale the *Cormorant* was borne downward until the sea poured over her leeward rails and swept half way up her decks. Luckily the motor was still running, and as she slowly righted she swung around into the screeching wind, when, with a boom like a cannon, the fore staysail ripped away its hurriedly tied fastenings and, bellowing out like a huge balloon, lifted the head of the yacht clear of the foaming seas and again bore her around broadside to the squall.

For a few terrible moments all seemed lost, for the stout canvas held; and though the wheel was hard over, the bow swung off to leeward, the wind and waves bore the yacht down, and each second her crew and passengers expected her to turn turtle. Down she went, until her boom dipped in the brine, and her masts were all but flat upon the sea, while men and boys clung desperately to ropes and stanchions.

There was nothing that could be done. No one

dared release his hold to crawl forward and free the sail, and no orders could be heard above the shriek of the hurricane and the roar of the deluge of rain. As each one prayed that the sail, a mast, or a rope might give way and allow the stricken boat to right herself again, deliverance suddenly appeared from an unexpected quarter.

From somewhere forward a lean, brown, almost naked form appeared; it slipped snakelike along the all but perpendicular deck, crept rapidly toward the bow and disappeared in the smother of foam and seas. The next instant there was a bellowing roar, the sodden sail flew off to leeward like a giant kite, whipped a moment into shreds and disappeared. As the *Cormorant* again rose to a level keel and shook the flood of water from her decks Rami was seen clinging precariously to the heaving bowsprit, where he was alternately lifted high in air and plunged beneath the tumbling seas.

The two sailors instantly rushed forward to his aid, but before they reached him the Hindu had wormed his way inboard and, rising from the heel of the bowsprit, disappeared into the galley.

By now the first fierce onslaught of the squall had been spent, and the short choppy sea had given place to long, green, white-capped rollers that reared their heads far above the yacht's bows. While the little vessel pitched horribly, and buried herself to the

forward hatch at every plunge, yet she was no longer in imminent danger, and everyone drew a long breath of thankfulness.

"Bully for old Rami," shouted Harry from where he clung to the cabin rails. "He certainly saved us that time."

"It was as brave a deed as ever I saw," said his uncle.

"And he's only a heathen coolie cook," put in Paul.

"Beggin' your pardon, Sir, 'e's a bloomin' good sailor-man," added Tom, again taking his place at the wheel.

"A regular second Gunga Din," said Harry, "but how funny he did look with nothing but a breech cloth and his skinny legs and snaky wet hair!"

"It's lucky you left the motor running, Paul," said Mr. Rogers. "The worst of the squall is over, but even now we'd be in grave danger if we fell off the wind. As it is——"

Even as he spoke the throb of the motor suddenly stopped, and as Paul dived below the yacht again swung around broadside to the wind.

Paul immediately reappeared, crying out: "I can't turn the motor over; something's jammed in the propeller or shaft."

"Up with the mizzen," shouted Mr. Rogers, but before the words were uttered Tom had foreseen

the necessity. Dropping the wheel, he sprang aft and slashing through the stops tailed onto the haliards.

To hoist the tiny sail took but an instant, but it was already too late, for as it felt the pressure of the wind the canvas ripped from its bolt-ropes and was whipped into shreds in a moment.

“Lively there! Up with the jib!” yelled Mr. Rogers, and Tom rushed forward, with Pete and the other sailor, and worked frantically to clear and raise the jib, while the *Cormorant* seemed each moment about to capsize.

As the little triangle of canvas rose from the bowsprit the yacht’s head rapidly swung around, and, stern to the wind and seas, she leaped away like a frightened living thing.

“God grant that may hold!” exclaimed Mr. Rogers, as the men came aft. “If we can only run before the waves for a time, we’ll be all right.”

“Aren’t we likely to run into something, going at this rate?” asked Paul, looking at the angry waves rushing past the stern of the flying yacht.

“Not until we strike the coast of Central America,” replied his father. “We’ve the whole Caribbean Sea before us, and these squalls are usually soon over. See, the sun’s breaking through now, and the wind’s settled down to a steady blow.”

Presently the sky stretched blue and clear on every

side; but the wind still blew half a gale, and the white-crested seas broke angrily behind and beside the yacht.

"Why, what's become of the islands?" exclaimed Harry. "I can't see land anywhere."

"Probably not," answered Mr. Rogers. "That squall has carried us a good many miles to the westward already, and we're traveling fifteen or twenty miles away from the nearest land every hour."

The sun was now sinking rapidly toward the western horizon; and while the wind had dropped considerably, it was still too strong, and the sea was too rough to allow Mr. Rogers to bring the *Cormorant* back on her course. Moreover, without her mizzen sail, and with her motor disabled, she was hard to handle. She seemed determined to plunge onward toward the setting sun.

"It's no use, Tom," said Mr. Rogers after several attempts had been made to hoist the close-reefed mainsail and swing the vessel about. "If we put enough sail on her to bring her about, we'll carry away something. You'll have to get busy and rig up some sort of a trysail on the mizzen mast. I'll handle the wheel with the boys' help if you'll send Rami aft with some hot coffee and a bite to eat."

Tom hurried forward at these orders, and presently Rami came aft with a pot of steaming coffee and sandwiches.

“That was a gallant feat of yours, Rami,” said Mr. Rogers as he took the welcome food. “We all owe our lives to your bravery and agility.”

“Yes, Sar. Thank you, Sar,” replied the Hindu, salaaming; and then with a troubled expression, he added, “Me larst tha cleaver, Sar. Me ver’ mooch sorry, Sahib. He mek drop in the sea, Sar.”

“Never mind the cleaver,” said Mr. Rogers kindly. “Thank Heaven you didn’t go with it. You can consider yourself in my service as long as you live if you wish to stay, Rami.”

“Thank you, Sar. Me mooch glad, Sahib,” smiled Rami, and salaaming again, he staggered forward along the heaving decks with the empty pots.

“You can’t make old Rami think he’s a hero,” said Paul as the cook disappeared. “He thinks a lot more of the loss of his pet cleaver than of his own act.”

“Yes,” replied Mr. Rogers, “like most Orientals, he’s a fatalist; but he combines true bravery and devotion with his fatalism, which is unusual.”

Tom now appeared and reported that he had found a spare topsail which could be used as a temporary mizzen, and with the help of Pete and Harry the two sailors soon had the canvas in place.

It was a crude makeshift, but it served its purpose; and the yacht was readily brought into the

wind. The mainsail was now hoisted and much to everyone's delight the gallant little ship swung onto her course, and sheered through the hissing brine toward the southeast as gayly as ever.

Darkness had now fallen and lights were hung out; and while everyone realized that they must stand at the wheel and sails throughout the long night, yet they were so grateful for their safety that no one minded in the least.

For hour after hour the *Cormorant* sailed steadily onward, and as the wind and sea fell the reefs were shaken out, and by midnight the yacht was sailing over a comparatively smooth sea under all her canvas.

It was still several hours before dawn when Harry, who was on watch, spied a dark object far off on the starboard bow. At first he thought it but a wave curling dark against the soft radiance of the starlit sea, but when the yacht again rose to the swell and the little speck still showed against the surface of the water, he saw that it was a boat. Hurrying aft, he told Tom of his discovery. The sailor scanned the sea for a moment.

"Ye're right, Sir," he said. "Yon's a boat adrift, an' by the way she floats she's not empty neither."

"Head for it then," cried Harry, "and I'll go below and rouse Mr. Rogers."

He soon reappeared with his uncle and Paul, and

all watched the drifting boat, now plainly visible ahead.

Soon the yacht was alongside, and Tom, seizing a line, leaped into the craft and made her fast.

As he did so a dark, shapeless form rose from the bottom of the boat, uttered the single cry "Water," and sank back motionless.

"Bring a lantern quick!" shouted Mr. Rogers, while Tom fumbled about in the boat and called for a rope, which was quickly lowered. Then, half lifted by the sailor and half hoisted from above, the unconscious castaway was raised to the yacht's deck and carried gently to the cabin.

As the boys caught sight of his features in the brightly lit room they uttered cries of horror and pity, for the man was a terrible sight. His face was covered with a short thick growth of beard, and the skin was black, swollen and seamed with deep, raw cracks. His lips were like burnt leather, his half-opened eyes were scarlet and bloodshot, and his thick hair was matted and caked with dried blood.

"Was he alone in the boat?" asked Mr. Rogers of Tom as they worked anxiously to restore the castaway to consciousness.

Tom shook his head. "No, Sir," he answered, "but t' other chap's too far gone for mortal help,

Sir. I covered him over with a bit of tarpaulin, Sir. God! but he's a awful sight."

"Is there anything by which to identify the boat?" he asked. "Look and see, and then lash the body in place and scuttle her. It's the only burial we can give the poor fellow. Tell me when you're ready and I'll read the service over him."

"Very well, Sir," replied the sailor. Touching his cap, he hurried on deck.

Meanwhile, the poor castaway in the cabin was slowly regaining consciousness, and was striving to utter words through his cracked and swollen lips; but all were unintelligible save "*Dios!*" and "water!"

Teaspoonful at a time, water and brandy were poured between his lips, and gradually he became quieter. Rami now appeared with a bowl of warm broth, and at Tom's call Mr. Rogers left the man in the care of the Hindu and the two boys and went on deck.

Standing at the rail above the little boat and its gruesome freight, he read the burial service as the water poured into it from the holes bored by Tom. As his last words were uttered the sinking craft settled to the level of the sea, and with a little gurgle disappeared into the depths forever.

"Did you find any means of identification?" asked Mr. Rogers as he walked aft with Tom.

"Yes, Sir," replied the sailor. "'Twas a whale-boat, Sir; an' if you'll b'leeve me, 'twas from that bloomin' ol' hooker the *Gazelle* what we boarded of a couple o' days back."

"Portuguese Joe's boat!" exclaimed Mr. Rogers. "That's certainly a marvelous coincidence."

"Yes, Sir. I reckon as how 'tis, Sir," said Tom. "Will I be a gettin' of her on her course, Sir?"

"Yes, Tom; you and Jack take charge, while I go below to see the poor chap there. I'll send one of the boys up to help."

He found the stranger sleeping quietly, looking greatly improved after having been washed and bandaged by Rami. Leaving the Hindu in charge, Mr. Rogers again went on deck with the boys.

"I wonder what became of the other men," said Paul. "I suppose there must have been more than two in the boat."

"Six or eight at least," answered Mr. Rogers. "I imagine Portuguese Joe was the bowman or harpooner, and there must have been a boat-steerer, and at least four oarsmen. Perhaps the survivor may be able to tell us the fate of his comrades, but very likely he hasn't a clear recollection. No doubt they died and were cast overboard by the others, or maybe they went mad and jumped into the sea."

The eastern sky was now bright with the coming dawn, and on every side the tumbling blue waves

ran unbroken to the horizon. Not a trace of land could be seen in any direction.

Mr. Rogers glanced at the compass, and then sent Harry for a chart, which he studied carefully.

"There's no way of telling just where we are until I can take an observation," he said. "The squall was from the Northeast, and we drifted before it for approximately four hours. Allowing a speed of twelve miles, we would be somewhere west of Bequia when we headed the *Cormorant* back on her course. We've been running at about eight knots for twelve hours, which would bring us to this point." He indicated a spot to the west of Grenada.

"Why, in that case, we're almost to Grenada," cried Paul.

"Yes, nearer Grenada than any other island, I should say," replied his father, "but this is merely 'dead reckoning.' By noon, if we don't sight land before, I'll take an observation and find just where we are. One thing is certain, we've a long beat dead to windward in order to make Barbados, and with this makeshift mizzen and no staysail, and unable to use the motor, 'twill be a hard job to make it. I fear we'll have to put into the nearest port and make repairs."

When the boys went below for breakfast they found the whaler awake and comfortable, and though

still very weak he was able to speak a few words, and with a wan smile he tried to thank Mr. Rogers for his rescue.

"Don't try to talk yet," advised Mr. Rogers. "You'll soon be strong and able to talk, and we'll all be glad to hear your story; but just now rest's the main thing."

The man seemed grateful, and obeyed like a child. Closing his eyes, he was soon fast asleep, and Pete was left in the cabin to look after his wants when he awoke.

"We've certainly had some excitement during the last twenty-four hours," said Paul as the boys lounged about the sunny deck. "First we're almost wrecked, and blown 'way off our course, and then we pick up a castaway. It's just like a Clark Russell story."

"You've overlooked Rami," said Harry. "I think the most exciting part of the trip was when he crawled out on the bowsprit and cut away the sail with his cleaver."

"It's all been exciting enough, and we can't complain if we don't find the treasure," replied Paul.

"I should think not," said Harry; "but isn't it queer how things turn out? If we hadn't been caught in that squall, we'd never have found the whaleboat and saved that poor fellow's life."

"It proves the truth of the old saying that 'it's

an ill wind that blows nobody good,'” remarked Mr. Rogers, who stood near.

Harry, who had been leaning idly over the rail, presently drew his uncle’s attention to some brilliantly hued objects on the surface of the sea.

“What *are* those things?” he asked. “I’ve been watching them for some time, and I can’t make them out at all. At first I thought they were bubbles, but they look too hard and firm for that, and they all seem just alike.”

“They’re known as ‘Portuguese men-o’-war,’” replied Mr. Rogers. “They are a species of jelly fish found only in the tropics. The portion you see is the float. It is hollow, tinted with prismatic colors, and serves as a sail to drift the animal hither and thither. The true animals are below the float, and from them depend long streaming tentacles. Each tentacle has its own peculiar duties, and the longest are provided with powerful stinging organs with which they kill and capture their prey. They are so poisonous that if your arms or limbs should touch one when in bathing you might be paralyzed or disabled. Funnily enough, a certain species of fish is immune to these stings, and spends his life among the tentacles, where he picks up an easy living on the bits of food dropped by the man-o’-war.”

“No one would dream they were such dangerous

things," said Harry. "They look so dainty and fragile."

"I thought the nautilus was the only animal that sailed," said Paul. "Are they the same as these men-o'-war?"

"The nautilus only sails in the fancy of poets," replied Mr. Rogers. "In reality, the nautilus is a heavy shell which lives on the bed of the sea in the Indian Ocean. The animal is a species of octopus. The paper nautilus, or argonaut, to which the tales of sailing refer, is another species of octopus which has a thin and dainty shell. It lives in the tropics but can't sail at all. They are sometimes found floating when dead, or are cast upon the beaches. In early times they were thought to sail or row about by means of their arms or tentacles, which are shaped like an oar."

Mr. Rogers now sent the boys for his sextant and prepared to take an observation. No land had yet been sighted, and both the boys were eager to learn where they were, and when Mr. Rogers called "Eight bells!" they all hurried to the cabin to work out the location of the yacht.

"Latitude, eleven degrees and fifty-two minutes north; longitude, sixty-two degrees and one minute west," announced Mr. Rogers at last; and, running his finger across the chart, he indicated the spot on the map. "Here's where we are, just to the south-

west of Grenada, and much nearer that island than any other."

"Why, we ought to be there before night!" exclaimed Paul. "It's only a few miles away."

"That's true," replied his father; "but unfortunately it's dead to windward and impossible to reach to-night with our rig and without power. I'm afraid our port must be Tobago, which is straight ahead; but I don't suppose you boys will object to visiting Robinson Crusoe's Island."

"Robinson Crusoe's Island!" exclaimed Harry. "I thought he was cast away on Juan Fernandez, in the South Pacific?"

"That's a common belief," replied Mr. Rogers; "but really old Robinson's story deals with Tobago; and if you'll read the book carefully, you'll find his own words prove this. In the first place, he set sail from Brazil, 'bound for Africa.' Then he was blown off his course, and, taking an observation, discovered he was in 'eleven degrees north latitude, beyond the coast of Guiana and toward the great river Oronoque,' as he says. From here he tried to reach the 'English Islands,' but was wrecked upon the unknown islet where he lived so long. Moreover, in his account of subsequent occurrences, he mentions sighting the 'Island of Trinidad.' All of which settles any question as to the locality of his shipwreck."

"But what made people think he was wrecked on Juan Fernandez?" asked Harry.

"That was owing to a mistake of Defoe, the author. In writing the story of Crusoe, Defoe had in mind the tale of Alexander Selkirk, who actually lived for four years a castaway on Juan Fernandez; and in his book he has confused the real and the fictitious heroes."

"Are there any relics of Robinson Crusoe in Tobago?" asked Paul.

"There, my boy, you, too, are confusing the real with the imaginary!" laughed his father. "There *was* no Robinson Crusoe; but the scenes described by Defoe and the places mentioned in his story still exist on Tobago. You may visit Crusoe's cave; may look forth toward Trinidad, as did Crusoe; and no doubt may still see the imprints of Friday's feet on the sand—if you are to believe the guides who will show you about."

"It'll be mighty interesting, anyhow, whether old Crusoe really lived there or not," said Harry. "It's another case of your 'ill-wind' proverb, Uncle Charles; and I must admit I'm rather glad we were blown off our course."

"If there are caves on Tobago, perhaps the treasure's there," suggested Paul.

"Perhaps it is," admitted Mr. Rogers. "Tobago is mainly of volcanic formation, but it has numerous

caves. Moreover, in olden times 'twas a favorite rendezvous for pirates and buccaneers. Its greatest interest, however, lies in the fact that its fauna, flora, and formation are those of South America rather than of the Antilles. In fact, scientists consider the island the last point of the tip end of the South American continent."

"Shall we be there to-night?" asked Paul.

"We should sight the island before dark," said Mr. Rogers. "But I don't believe I'll attempt entering the harbor after dark under sail alone. If we lay to until daylight, 'twill be much safer."

At this moment Pete appeared, stating that lunch was ready and adding that the castaway wished to speak to Mr. Rogers.

CHAPTER XVI

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S ISLAND

THEY found the rescued whaler sitting propped up in bed, already on the road to health.

"I'm glad to see you're getting on so well," said Mr. Rogers. "But you had a close shave, and we were only just in time. I understand you were in Portuguese Joe's boat from the bark *Gazelle*. We visited her two days ago, and Captain Lapham told us of the loss of the boat."

"Yaas, sair," replied the whaler. "My name eet ees Jo, an' moocha thanks I geef to you an' tha goode God for meka me save. Tella me queek, please, you save ainy odder one from tha boat, no?"

"No; you were the only one," replied Mr. Rogers. "The body of one of your comrades was in the boat, and we buried him at sea. You must have had a terrible time. What became of the other men?"

"*Dios!* Terreeble, yaas, sair. Tha odder boys go—whata you call heem, nutty—an' drinka tha sea an' jump een an' drown. On'y but me an' Olsen keep een tha boat. Bimeby Olsen—he one beeg stronga mans—he say, 'Jo, I go to keel you an' eeta

you up.' He creep slow 'long tha boat weeth tha hatchet, an' me I keep steel an' wait, an' when he meka to heet I mova tha haid an' meka to heet heem with tha knife. Then somatheeng heet in my haid, an' ev'rytheeng get red an' black, an' I don't know notheeng more, an' bimeby wake up een theesea sheep.'"

"Don't worry," said Mr. Rogers. "Luckily, you escaped the worst of your experiences by losing consciousness, and no one can blame you for killing Olsen in self-defense, or for anything that took place while you were out of your head. We'll all forget it, and will give thanks we arrived in time."

The Portuguese seemed comforted by this; and, being quite exhausted by his efforts to tell his story, he sank back upon his pillows and closed his eyes.

An hour or two later Pete brought word that Joe wanted to come on deck, and Mr. Rogers gave his consent, adding that nothing would be better than the open air.

Much to everyone's surprise, the Portuguese was able to walk with little help; and, seating himself in a deck chair, he seemed to enjoy the air and sunshine.

"Ah! Thees sheep he onea yacht, no?" he said.

"Yes," replied Harry. "It's the *Cormorant* from New York, and we're bound to Barbados. I suppose you'll stay with us until we arrive?"

"Yes, sair, eef eet please," answered the whaler. "Een Barbados me meet plenty sheep, yes, an' find heem consul of my countree. Thees way me reech New Bedford mebbe."

"Land ho!" shouted Tom. Hurrying to the rail, the boys gazed eagerly ahead to catch a first glimpse of the new island.

It was some time before they saw it, a pale-blue, cloud-like blur on the horizon, which Mr. Rogers assured them was Tobago.

Portuguese Joe seemed almost as much interested in the distant island as the boys, and to Mr. Rogers' questions he replied that he had visited Tobago several times and had no doubt that new sails could be procured there. He also said that there were no facilities for docking the yacht to examine the propeller and shaft.

Pete, who was standing near, exclaimed: "'Scuse me, sah, but Ah kin dive b'low an' see wha's hum-buggin' tha p'reller. Trus' me fo' that when we meks to cum to anchor, sah."

"I never thought of that," declared Mr. Rogers. "To be sure, you can dive down and examine the propeller when we get in calm water."

Hourly the blue haze of land grew more distinct, and soon after it was first sighted Mr. Rogers pointed out a second cloud-like mass, which, he informed the boys, was Trinidad.

They now noticed that the water had become dull and greenish, having lost its deep azure tint.

"That's due to the Orinoco," Mr. Rogers explained. "Trinidad and Tobago are directly off the mouth of the great river, and the sediment-laden water flowing into the sea discolors it for many miles from the river's mouth."

"Won't we see South America?" asked Paul.

"No," replied his father. "If we were a little more to the southwest, we might get a glimpse of the mountains of Venezuela, but we're fully fifty miles from the coast of the continent, and there's no very high land along the nearest portion of the coast."

"Is Tobago an English island?" asked Harry.

"Yes, but it's belonged to half a dozen different European Powers in the past. In fact, no island of which I have knowledge has had a more varied or interesting history. It was discovered by Columbus, who named it Tobago owing to its resemblance in form to a tobacco pipe. But it was first settled by the Dutch in 1632. They were soon driven out by the Spaniards, however, and it changed hands again in 1642, when the Duke of Courland made a settlement at a place now known as Courland Bay. These colonists were in turn driven off by the Dutch, who were attacked and subjugated by the French. But a

year later they deserted the island, and left it without a white inhabitant.

“The Dutch then took possession, and they were driven away by the English a few years later, only to return and occupy the place, which was once more attacked by the British, who sailed away after taking many prisoners.

“The Dutch were next assailed by the French, who destroyed everything they could find, leaving Tobago to its primeval solitude until it was restored to the Dutch in 1679 by treaty.

“Five years later it was declared a neutral island, to be left unsettled, and it thus remained for sixty years, when the French settled upon it. Again the strife for its possession began, and the British obtained Tobago and held it until 1802, when it was ceded to the French, and in that year Tobago became the residence of John Paul Jones. Finally the island was taken by the English in 1803, and was permanently ceded to them in 1814.”

“I don’t see how the settlers ever had time to cultivate the place or even to build houses with so much fighting going on,” said Paul.

“They *did* have a pretty hard time of it,” said his father; “but those old settlers were stout men, and between their fights with the Caribs and their wars with their neighbors they managed to build forts, establish large estates, and even construct a

paved road across the islands, remains of which may still be seen."

The island was now plainly visible. "There don't seem to be any high mountains there," said Harry.

"No," replied Mr. Rogers; "the highest point is Pigeon Hill, only nineteen hundred feet above the sea; and the southern portion of the island appears almost level when viewed from the water; but after you land you'll find it broken up into numerous little conical hills and round valleys, and every valley has its own little stream. The land is very fertile, and the northern part of the island is completely forest-covered."

"Can't we reach the harbor to-night?" asked Paul. "It seems only a short distance away."

His father laughed. "Distances are deceptive down here. The island appears within a very short distance, but really it's still over an hour's sail from us, and darkness will fall long before we round the southern point and come within sight of Scarborough, on the southeastern coast."

The wind dropped with the sun, and soon the *Cormorant* was drifting motionless upon the polished sea.

"We'll have to keep watch-and-watch again to-night," said Mr. Rogers, "for there's no anchorage here, and we'll be obliged to stand off and on, and the wind may rise."



Every valley has its own little stream

Suddenly Harry, who had been standing at the rail watching the dark bulk of the island, said: "Why, we're moving away from the island, Uncle Charles!"

"Certainly we are," answered his uncle. "We're in the current from the Orinoco, and unless we have some wind we'll drift slowly north. For that reason we must take advantage of every cat's-paw and hold our position as nearly as possible."

The night was pleasant, and a light breeze sprang up which enabled the *Cormorant* to maintain her bearings without resorting to the motor. With the earliest light of dawn she was headed toward the southern end of the island; and, rounding Sandy Point, dropped anchor in Scarborough harbor, with the little town nestling at the base of a fort-crowned hill. The boys were eager to get ashore, but they found the town small and uninteresting, with numerous stores, a few churches, and some enormous government buildings.

Mr. Rogers soon found a ship chandler who agreed to furnish a new staysail and mizzen; and, having attended to this matter, he told the boys he was ready to devote the day to sightseeing.

A native guide and ponies were employed and the party set forth to explore the scenes made familiar by Robinson Crusoe's story. They followed a well-kept road along the windward coast, visited the

"Crusoe Cave," forded numerous streams, and passed through mile after mile of luxurious vegetation. As they topped a rise and looked down upon a charming bay with some tiny buildings near the beach, the whole surrounded and half hidden by vegetation and groves of palms, Harry cried out:

"Why, I do believe that's the place where the treasure's buried! See, there's the little islands off the coast, there's the lagoon with the mangroves, and over beyond is the headland and sand beach."

"The general effect *is* like the map, I admit," replied Mr. Rogers; "but if you note the bearings you'll find the keys are almost directly off the beach, whereas in the map they're shown far to one side and around a cape or point."

"That's so," said Harry sorrowfully; "but just the same it looks like a bully place for pirates' treasure."

"Dat Luis d'Or estate, sah," remarked the negro guide, who had stood listening respectfully to the conversation. "Long time ago plenty pirates hereabouts, sah, but not in mah time, sah. His Majesty clean 'em all up fo' surely, sah."

"Has anyone ever found pirates' treasure on Tobago?" Mr. Rogers asked.

The guide scratched his head and hesitated. "No, sah, not to mah knowin'. Ah expeculate dat ol' Bass

Crusoe fo' surely cotched all de traysure on this-a here islan', sah."

The party were now descending the hill, and soon reached the little group of buildings by the shore.

Here they stopped for luncheon, and as they ate the hospitable manager entertained them with stories of the island; but, like their guide, he assured them that he had never heard of buried treasure on Tobago. "Although," he added, "we do sometimes find old rusty cannon in the bush when we are hunting, and the numerous bays and inlets were formerly frequented by buccaneers and pirates."

"Is there any game on Tobago?" asked Paul. "You spoke of hunting."

"To be sure," laughed their host. "We have armadillo, agouti, manacou, and wild hogs among the animals, as well as ducks, pigeons, and 'cocker-icos' for wild fowl."

"What are the cockericos?" asked Harry.

"They're a sort of wild pheasant," answered the planter, "and very gamey. The wild hogs, as we call them, are peccaries and are very fierce, and the manacou is like your opossum. I'm sorry you're not to stop longer, so I could take you for a hunt in the bush. I'm sure you boys would enjoy it."

"We certainly would," replied Harry. "The only

hunting we've done was in St. Kitts, when we went on a monkey hunt."

This led to the story of Harry's fall and the discovery of the map, in which the manager was deeply interested. Paul spread his copy of the chart on the table, and the planter examined it intently.

"I'm quite sure it's not any portion of Tobago," he said, at last. "I know every inch of the coast, and would recognize such well-marked surroundings at once. To my mind, it looks far more like one of the Pearl Islands off Venezuela, or one of the Grenadines."

"Oh, dear," sighed Harry, "we're not going to the Pearl Islands, and it does seem as if we're going to miss finding the treasure, after all!"

"You're catching the true treasure-seeker's fever," laughed his uncle. "But I warned you at St. Kitts that your chances were not very good."

"Oh, I don't really care much," said Harry. "We've had a fine trip and lots of excitement we didn't expect. But if we could only find the treasure we could buy another yacht and go hunting for adventures all over the Spanish Main."

When they reached the yacht, they found Tom and Jack busy placing the new sails in position; and Pete reported that he had been diving to the propeller and had discovered a quantity of rope tangled

about the blades and shaft. "The halliards o' that bloomin' staysail," explained Tom.

"Run down and try the motor, Paul," said Mr. Rogers. "We may find the shaft or propeller bent."

A few moments later the motor was chugging away merrily, and Paul reported that there was no indication of a bent or jammed shaft or wheel.

"That's fine," said Mr. Rogers. "We'll have to consider you our submarine engineer, Pete. You've certainly saved us a lot of time and trouble by your diving."

Sunrise the next morning found the *Cormorant* well out to sea and headed northward toward Grenada, seventy-five miles distant.

At breakfast the conversation turned to the pirate's treasure; and, spreading one of the maps upon the table, the boys were soon deep in a discussion of its various features.

Suddenly they were startled by the sound of a sharply indrawn breath behind them; and, turning, they found Portuguese Joe staring over their shoulders at the map, his sparkling black eyes gleaming with excitement and his lips tightly compressed.

Instantly, however, his eyes softened, his lips parted in a smile, and with a wave of his hand and a shrug he exclaimed: "'Scusa, sairs. Me no' theenka you no' wan' me looka tha map."

"That's all right, Joe," said Harry. "We don't

mind you looking at it. Perhaps you can tell us where the place is." He proceeded to tell the whaler how the map had been found.

The fellow pored over the little chart closely, and finally shook his head. "No, sair. Me no' nevere see theesa place. You theenk traysure steel be een theesa cave, yes?"

"We can't tell," answered Paul. "The map was made so long ago there's a pretty good chance the gold's been taken before now; but the first thing we want to find out is which island it's on."

"Mucho sorry, sair; me no' know theesa. Eef theesa sheep b'long me, nevere me stopa look for theesa traysure. No, sair; me go everay place, an' bimeby mebbe me find heem, si."

"Oh, we can't spend forever hunting for it!" laughed Paul. "We'll have to give up after we reach St. Vincent; but perhaps we'll find it on one of the Grenadines."

The map was then folded up and replaced in Harry's pocket, and the boys went on deck followed by the Portuguese.

Early in the afternoon Grenada's lofty mountains were sighted, and the boys began asking questions about the island they were approaching.

"It's a fairly large place," replied Mr. Rogers. "It is about twenty miles long by twelve miles wide and very mountainous. Its highest point is an ex-

tinct volcano three thousand feet in height known as Mount St. Catherine, but the ancient craters are now occupied by beautiful fresh-water lakes, much like the Mountain Lake of Dominica. The largest of these, known as the Gran Etang, is about seventeen hundred feet above sea level, and, unlike the Dominican lake, it has a visible outlet."

"Shall we have a chance to visit the interior?" asked Paul.

"Probably not," replied his father. "We are already several days behind the time at which I expected to reach Barbados, and the interior of Grenada would be so similar to that of Dominica that little of interest or novelty would be seen."

Shortly after noon the *Cormorant* passed close to the southern end of Grenada; and, sailing under the frowning old fortress on its jutting promontory, it entered the crater harbor of St. George's.

The boys found the harbor and town the most picturesque port they had yet visited, and they were impatient to go ashore and climb the green and wooded height which rose on every hand above the almost circular bay.

They found the place very hilly, the streets often running up so steeply from the waterside, in places built like flights of steps; and in one spot a tunnel had been cut through the hill to make the way easier. Climbing up to the hill fort, the boys obtained a

beautiful view of the harbor and the town, and then rambled off over a shaded road toward some distant buildings.

Presently, entering a cocoa grove, they stopped to examine the odd red and yellow pods.

"Why, these fruits grow directly from the trunk of the tree!" exclaimed Harry.

"Yes," said Mr. Rogers; "and if you'll examine the branches and trunks closely you'll find little buds and starlike blossoms sprouting from the bark itself."

"Isn't that curious!" said Paul. "How do they make cocoa from these fruits?"

"The cocoa of commerce is the pulverized seeds of the fruit," replied his father. "If we split a pod open, we'd find it filled with a soft white pulp in which are numerous brownish seeds or beans. Ah, here comes a woman with a load now!"

A mulatto girl stepped into the roadway bearing a wooden tray filled with freshly gathered cocoa beans. It was a sloppy, dripping load, and the soft pulp had run down over the tray and the girl's head and shoulders. Mr. Rogers stopped her to show the boys the oblong beans, and asked the girl where the pods were being opened. She directed them to a bypath that led into the grove; and, following this, the party soon reached a small open space, where a number of negroes were chopping open the pods.

A constant procession of men, boys, and girls brought the pods from the grove, and the openers cut each pod in twain, dumped the pulp and seeds into a huge basket, and tossed the empty shells into a pile.

The mulatto overseer, who stood near by, suggested that they visit the estate buildings and witness the process of fermenting and drying the beans. Here they were welcomed by a pleasant young Englishman, who introduced himself as Mr. Grayson, the manager of the estate, and who insisted on their having a cup of tea and a light lunch before anything else, and led the way to the cool veranda of the house. He listened to the boys' story of their trip, occasionally ejaculating "By Jove!" or "Ripping!" and when the boys finished, he exclaimed: "My word, but you chaps must have had a jolly fine trip, you know! That *was* ripping fine of the old Hindu to cut the ropes just in the nick of time. And to think of picking up the Portuguese chap! 'Pon my word, it sounds like jolly fiction, don't you know. But I say, do you really expect to find that pirates' treasure trove?"

"We've about given up hopes of that," said Harry. "Would you like to see the map?"

"Would I!" exclaimed their host. "Well, rather!"

Harry reached in his pocket, and a shade of dis-

appointment swept over his face. "That's too bad," he exclaimed. "I changed my coat just before I left the yacht, and left the map in my other pocket."

"Well, I've mine," said Paul, "so it's all right." Drawing out his copy, he handed it to Grayson, who examined it minutely and kept up a running fire of exclamations.

"You chaps needn't bother about searching Grenada," he exclaimed, as he returned the map to Paul. "Been all over the island, you know, and I assure you there's no place like this on the whole jolly island."

"We're going to look over the Grenadines," said Paul, "and if we don't find it there we'll have to give it up."

"You're jolly good sports!" exclaimed the Englishman. "If I was a youngster and had that map, I'd never rest until I'd hunted every blooming island in the Antilles."

"That's just what Portuguese Joe said," laughed Harry; "but we've had so much fun we don't mind missing the treasure. Perhaps we'll be able to hunt for it again some other time."

"Right-o!" exclaimed Grayson heartily. "But what say, shall we take a look in at the drying and sweating houses?" Rising, he led the way across the yard to a number of low stone buildings. "This is the sweating house," he explained, opening the



He led the way to a group of low stone buildings



In many places the beans are dried on cowhides in the streets

door of a small, solidly built building of masonry. "The cocoa is placed in these stone vats just as brought in by the girls, and is left here a few days to ferment. Then it's taken out and placed on the drying trays over yonder."

Closing the door, he approached a row of low, open sheds containing racks which extended for a number of feet into the open, and on these racks were enormous trays or drawers running on wheels and trucks, and each filled with a layer of the brown cocoa beans.

In some of them barefooted men and women were walking about, armed with long-handled wooden rake-like implements.

"They're raking the beans about to dry them evenly, you know," the manager explained.

"I should think they'd wear shoes if they're going to walk about in them!" exclaimed Harry. "I'll hate to eat cocoa after seeing those people scuffling about barefooted among the beans."

Grayson laughed heartily. "My word! Never thought of that. But really it doesn't make any difference, you know. Beans must be polished and colored, and there's no better way than to let the chaps shuffle about in them. Dirty? Really, you know, this is not bad. Ours is all in trays above ground, but in many places the beans are all dried in trays or cowhides on the ground or in the streets, where

cattle, pigs, and poultry run about in them. Saves a jolly lot of work and colors the beans just as well. At all events, it doesn't really matter. When the beans are manufactured, the shells are removed. One only drinks the inside of the bean, after all."

"Why do you have the trays on tracks?" asked Harry.

"That's to enable us to keep them from the wet. Push them into the shed when it showers, you know. Rain's our worst enemy. If the beans mildew, they're jolly well ruined."

"Is cocoa very profitable?" asked Paul, as the party sauntered toward the house. "I should think 'twould be great fun to live here and get rich by just letting those beans dry in the sun."

"Profitable? Well, rather! That's the trouble, don't you know. Every nigger on the place who can buy a bit of land and plant some cocoa trees is independent. Beggars get so they won't work on the estates half the time. As for fun, there's not so much precious sport in a planter's life, I assure you. First, you've to clear the land and plant. Then you've to grow shade; young cocoa must have shade for two years. Then it's four years or more before you have a crop, you know. Even then it's not all beer and skittles, as you say. By Jove, no! Rats eat the pods, bally monkeys eat more, and beggarly natives steal what's left. One has to be up and

about. It doesn't answer to sit around and twirl one's thumbs, you know."

"To raise anything with success requires plenty of attention and hard work," said Mr. Rogers. "We must be leaving now, however. We've enjoyed our visit immensely, and you've been most kind to give us so much of your time."

"Don't mention it, my dear man!" cried Grayson. "But I say, you're not going to run off this way, you know. Really you *must* stop to dinner. Then I'll drive you to town in the trap in the cool evening. Do be good chaps, and stop. It's a pleasure, I assure you. 'Pon my word, yes."

"We'd certainly enjoy the drive and your company," replied Mr. Rogers, "but my sailors will think we're lost. You see, we came ashore in the rowboat and I directed the men to wait for us at the dock. We expected to return in an hour or two."

"Don't fret about that," said the planter. "I'll call up my agent in St. Georges. Have him send word to the men, you know. Do you wish them to return to the yacht or to stop ashore?"

"Very well, then, if you insist. Tell the men to enjoy themselves about town and to be at the dock at whatever hour you wish. But we'll only accept your invitation on the condition that you'll go aboard the *Cormorant* and pass the evening with us."

“Righto! That *will* be jolly!” He hurried in to call up his agent by telephone.

The boys enjoyed their dinner on the estate, and in the cool of early evening had a splendid drive through the neighboring hills, reaching the dock about eight o’clock. The two sailors were comfortably seated on a pile of cocoa bags, surrounded by a laughing crowd of natives, who were being highly entertained by the sailors’ raillery. At sight of Mr. Rogers and the boys, the two men jumped to their feet; and, gathering up a great basket of fruit and a dozen green cocoanuts, they hurried down to the waiting boat.

“Judging from your loot and the size of your audience, you seem to have obeyed my instructions to enjoy yourselves to the letter,” said Mr. Rogers, as the sailors pushed off from the dock.

“Yes, sir; we might say as ’ow we ’ave, sir,” replied Tom. “They’re a chummy lot, these ’ere natives, sir, an’ grub’s so bloomin’ cheap hit’s a crime not to buy it, sir.”

CHAPTER XVII

MISFORTUNES AND SURPRISES

It was a calm, dark night, and the various vessels riding at anchor in the harbor were only visible by their twinkling lights; and Mr. Rogers, at the helm, peered intently into the blackness in an effort to distinguish the riding lights of the *Cormorant*.

The boat had proceeded for some distance when he turned sharply to the left.

"That's strange!" he exclaimed. "Here's the yacht dead ahead, but no lights burning. I'm surprised that Rami and Pete are so careless." As he finished speaking, he hailed the *Cormorant*.

No voice responded; and, running the boat alongside, Mr. Rogers sprang onto the deck, followed by Mr. Grayson and the boys.

"Something's certainly wrong," he said. "I can't imagine what's become of Rami, Joe, and Pete."

"My word! It does look rummy!" agreed Grayson.

"Run forward to the galley and hunt up Rami, Tom," ordered Mr. Rogers, as with the others at his heels he hurried toward the cabin.

The companionway door was wide open, but all within was dark. As Mr. Rogers reached the foot of the stairs, he stumbled over some soft, yielding object on the floor. Stooping and touching it, he gave a startled exclamation. "Quick! A light, someone!" he called. "There's a body on the deck here!"

Grayson instantly struck a match, and its flickering light revealed Pete, bound, helpless, and gagged, but still very much alive, as his wildly rolling eyes testified. A moment later the cabin was flooded with light from the swinging lamp, and the gag was taken from the mouth of the boy and the ropes that bound him were rapidly cut.

Pete gulped, drew a long breath, and started to speak; but before he could utter a word running footsteps sounded on the deck above, and Tom shouted below:

"S'help me, Rami's a-lyin' in his bunk, an' his bloomin' head's bashed in!"

Instantly Pete was forgotten, and all rushed from the cabin toward the galley and Rami's quarters.

The Hindu was lying half upon his bunk, his head hanging over the edge, his white turban soaked with blood, while a gory trail led across the floor to the doorway. Mr. Rogers lifted his head and placed it on the pillow.

"Thank God, he's not dead!" he exclaimed.

“Bring water and bandages, somebody. Fetch my medicine case and brandy, Paul.”

As he spoke he rapidly unwound the cook’s turban, presently disclosing the wound, a jagged cut extending from ear to forehead.

While the wound was being washed and dressed and brandy was forced between Rami’s lips, Pete was striving to explain what had happened; but between his own fright and the excitement over Rami’s predicament his words were utterly unintelligible. Soon, however, the Hindu gave signs of returning consciousness.

“Now, Pete,” said Mr. Rogers, “tell us just what happened.”

“Joe he mek to do all this, sah!” cried the black boy. “Ah don’t know how come Rami mashed up, sah. Ah’s soddin’ on tha aige of tha cabin step mek-kin story wif Joe, an’ bimeby it comin’ dark-like, an’ Joe say: ‘Pete, jes’ run an’ fotch tha light.’ An’ me mek to do, an’ turn about, an’ nex’ Ah knows, Bam! somet’in’ cotch me haid, an’ Ah roll downstairs, an’ Joe mek to grab me an’ tie me in tha rope lak yo’ fin’ me, sah. Ah can’ tell yo’ nothin’ mo’, sah.”

“Of all the ungrateful scoundrels!” exclaimed Mr. Rogers.

“By Jove! What a——” began Grayson; but his sentence was cut short by Jack, who thrust his head

in the door, bawling: "Launch gone, sir. Falls a-hangin' slack from the davits, sir."

"Took the launch, too, eh?" said Mr. Rogers. "I wonder what in the world's the meaning of all this, anyway?"

"Perhaps Rami can tell us when he's able to speak," suggested Paul.

Harry now appeared. "My map's been taken!" he exclaimed. "You know I left it in my coat when I went ashore."

"I have it!" said Grayson. "Beggar stole the map and ran off in the launch to hunt the treasure on his own account, I'll be bound. By Jove! What a rotter!"

"I guess you're right," agreed Mr. Rogers. "No doubt he trussed up Pete to prevent him giving an alarm. Ah, Rami seems to be coming to! We'll soon learn what he knows of this affair."

The Hindu opened his eyes; and, seeing his friends, smiled, and in a weak voice murmured: "Ai! You come back to sabe Rami, sar! Sorry for trouble, sahib. Joe call to Rami, an' me look out, an' tha mon heet too quick, an' me fall down. When wake up, Rami plenty sick, sar, an' crawl to bunk for to die. Mooch please to fin' me still 'live, sahib."

"Poor old chap!" muttered Grayson.

"He evidently knows nothing of what happened

after being struck," said Mr. Rogers. Turning to Rami, he added soothingly: "It's all over, Rami. I'm glad your wound is not serious. Lie still and rest, and you'll be well by morning."

"Very well, sahib. Thank you, sar."

"Stay with him, Tom," ordered Mr. Rogers. "And you, Pete, be within call. We can't do anything more for his comfort, so we might as well leave him for the present. This is certainly a strange welcome for a visitor, Grayson. It's not at all the sort of entertainment I'd planned."

"My word! It's bully, don't you know!" exclaimed the Englishman. "Excitement, and all that sort of thing, you know. Not the knockin' up of the Hindu and the loss of the boat. But I say, hadn't we better notify the Bobbies? May apprehend the beggar, you know."

"Good idea!" replied Mr. Rogers. "It came to my mind, but I don't know about leaving Rami. He may become feverish."

"I'll attend to it, if you wish," said Grayson. "Pleasure, I assure you. One of the sailors can set me ashore, and I'll jolly well soon have a description of your launch and the Portuguese chap telephoned throughout the island. Bobbies are black, you know, but not bad at this sort of thing. 'Pon my word, no! By Jove, I'll do more! Have the inspector chap cable to other islands. Portuguese beggar

may head straight away for some other place, don't you know!"

"I hate to have you leave in this way," replied Mr. Rogers regretfully. "And I fear you're putting yourself to a great deal of trouble; but I'm all the more grateful."

"Not a bit of it. Regular lark." Stepping into the boat, he called out: "Ta, ta! See you in the morning!"

Rami had recovered enough from the effects of the assault by morning to serve breakfast; and he reported the pantry had been looted of food and supplies.

"That explains Joe's attack on Rami," said Mr. Rogers. "He evidently had no intention of starting forth without provisions."

"I wonder if the police will catch him?" asked Paul.

"I doubt it," answered his father. "In all probability he'll give Grenada a wide berth, and head for other islands. Grayson's suggestion to cable to the various ports may result in his capture, however."

"I don't mind the loss of the map," said Harry. "But to think of him attacking old Rami, binding Pete and stealing the launch after we'd saved his life. He doesn't deserve any mercy."

"I'm principally interested in securing the

launch," remarked Mr. Rogers. "I purchased it especially for Captain Perkins, and it will require some time to replace it with another from New York, not to mention the monetary loss."

They were interrupted by a cheery hail from the deck, and, hurrying from the cabin, found Grayson, who had just arrived. He told them no news had been received of the Portuguese, but that cable messages had been sent to all the neighboring islands, so that if the whaler attempted to land near any settlement he would certainly be caught.

"Greatest sport I've had in years!" Grayson exclaimed. "Feel like a regular Sherlock Holmes; fact! Like a story-book out and out. 'Pon my word, yes! Well, bye-bye. Must be off to estate, you know. Let me know if you get the Portuguese beggar."

Shaking hands all around, the Englishman bade them farewell and stepped into the shore boat.

A few minutes later the *Cormorant* was again under way and headed up the coast toward distant St. Vincent.

At one point Mr. Rogers called the boys' attention to a precipice rising directly from the sea and jutting, in the form of a small promontory, from the surrounding land.

"That's 'Leaper's Hill,' or, as it's known to the natives, 'Morne des Sauteurs,'" he said. "And it

marks the last stand of the Caribs against Europeans in Grenada. They were driven by the French onto the summit of the cliff, which is only accessible by a single hidden trail. The French, however, succeeded in discovering the secret way, and surprised the Indians in their refuge. A number were massacred, and the survivors, rather than submit to defeat, threw themselves from the cliff into the sea."

"What a cruel lot those old Frenchmen were!" exclaimed Paul.

"They were no worse than the English, Dutch, or Spaniards," replied his father, "and we can't judge people of those days by present standards. Life was cheap, men lived by the sword, and might made right. For that matter, our own treatment of the American Indians has been just as barbarous in many instances."

The *Cormorant* was now passing the northern end of Grenada. To the north could be seen the faint outlines of the first of the Grenadines, and the yacht was headed eastward to skirt their windward shores.

"Keep your eyes open, boys," said Mr. Rogers. "We'll not stop unless you see a spot that looks like your map."

"How many islands are there?" asked Harry, preparing to study the land through his glasses.

"I presume the natives would say there are three hundred and sixty-five, one for each day in the

year," replied Mr. Rogers, laughing. "That appears the invariable rule wherever there are numerous small islands in a group. But in reality only a few of the Grenadines deserve the name of islands. Carriacou is the largest and most southerly. Stretching northward are Union, Canouan, Batoxia, Baliceaux, and Becquia, while between and about them are numerous isolated rocks, solitary peaks, and grassy islets; the whole forming a connecting chain between St. Vincent and Grenada. In fact, many scientists believe that the two islands were originally one, and that the Grenadines are merely the projecting summits of a submerged central mountain range."

The *Cormorant* soon passed several tiny islets; some were barren, rocky, and forsaken; others grassy and fringed with palms. Presently the yacht was approaching Carriacou.

"Why, that looks like a big island!" exclaimed Paul. "There are real mountains on it."

"Yes; several of the Grenadines have fairly good-sized mountains," replied his father, "and many of them are very fertile. The vegetation is luxurious, and the few planters, the fishermen and others who live on them have an easy-going existence, nature providing for all their wants."

Skirting along the windward coast of Carriacou,

the *Cormorant* passed a tiny village, and Harry, who was closely scanning the shore, cried out:

“Oh, Uncle Charles, I believe they’re trying to signal us! I can see a boat putting off, and the men are waving their arms.”

Mr. Rogers put the glasses to his eyes. “I believe you’re right, Harry. We’ll lay to and see what they want. Perhaps they have news of Joe.”

Orders were then given, and the yacht soon came to a standstill off the little beach, while the shore boat rapidly approached, pulled by stalwart negroes. As it came alongside, a strapping negro in a dark-blue uniform arose from his seat in the stern, and, touching his helmet, addressed Mr. Rogers:

“Compliments of the lieutenant, sir. He send to tell you he have a mind that the malefactor known and described as Joe of Portuguese nationality parsed Carriacou in the obscurity of the hours of the night, sir. Several subjects of his majesty the king—God save him!—report to the fact of a launch parsing this harbor at the aforesaid time, sir. The lieutenant had a mind that it was incumbent upon the constabulary of Carriacou to offer all information and aid in their power, sir.”

“Very well,” replied Mr. Rogers, striving to avoid laughing at the man’s stiff and formal speech. “Convey my compliments to your lieutenant, and thank him for his information. But how did he know this

was the yacht *Cormorant*? You appear to have very efficient police on Carriacou."

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir; the lieutenant will appreciate the compliment, sir. We couldn't well mistake your yacht, sir. The description submitted by cable was quite explicit, sir."

Again touching his helmet, the sable representative of the law resumed his seat, and was soon dancing over the waves toward shore.

"He must have come from Antigua, judging by his English," remarked Harry, as the yacht again heeled over to the trade wind.

"Not at all," replied his uncle. "I expect he's a native of the Grenadines. Canouan was originally settled by an English baronet who was literally 'monarch of all he surveyed.' His descendants are found throughout the Grenadines, and he insisted on very precise English from all his employees and retainers."

"I wonder if we'll catch up with Joe," said Paul. "If he really passed here last night, we may sight him yet."

"If he sees the yacht, he'll likely run into some small inlet or bay concealed by rocks or foliage and wait till we pass," replied Mr. Rogers. "He's not fool enough to allow us to sight him."

Beyond Carriacou another island was sighted, which, Mr. Rogers stated, was Union. It was a

green spot, a perfect island gem, and the boys were enthusiastic over its beauty.

“It is scarcely cultivated,” Mr. Rogers informed them, “and its woods and waters teem with game and fish; and nearly every native is a hunter and fisherman. Many of them are also whalers, and Union is famous throughout the West Indies for its native-built boats.”

The *Cormorant* ran close inshore, and near the northern end of the island passed through a narrow strait, close to a tiny, tree-covered islet. As the boys caught sight of it, both cried out: “Hurrah! There’s the treasure island!”

“In that case, someone’s ahead of you,” exclaimed Mr. Rogers. “See, there’s a boat close to the rocks this side the beach.”

“I do believe it’s our launch!” shouted Harry.

“You’re right!” exclaimed Mr. Rogers, fixing his glasses on the tiny white object. “Luff in close to the beach, Tom. That’s right. Let go the anchor.”

The next moment the anchor splashed into the calm waters and the yacht swung round toward the land. Quickly the rowboat was lowered; and, followed by Mr. Rogers and the boys, the sailors tumbled into it and pulled lustily toward the launch.

From the yacht it had appeared moored close to the jutting reef, but as they drew near, Mr. Rogers exclaimed: “The launch is fast on the rocks.” A

closer examination disclosed the fact that she was badly stove in, having evidently been driven against the reef while running at full speed.

"It's not worth saving," said Mr. Rogers regretfully, "but we might as well land. We may find Joe."

"And we may find the treasure!" cried Paul excitedly.

"No, we won't," said Harry positively. "I've been studying the shore, and it doesn't correspond to the map."

"I'd like to know why not?" asked Paul. "There's the beach and palms, there's the same little reef, and I noticed the keys off the other end as we came around."

"That's all very true, Paul," replied Harry; "but the map shows a ridge in the center of the island and a hill at the southern end, while this place is flat as a pancake and has only a sand-spit for its southern point."

"I think you're right, Harry," said Mr. Rogers. "At first sight, I confess I thought you'd at last stumbled on the pirates' island; but I can see now it's very different. I suspect Joe, too, was fooled by this island. Perhaps he thought he recognized it as soon as he saw your map, and made up his mind then and there to steal the launch and beat us to it. Probably in the darkness he ran the launch on the

reef. We'll soon find out if he escaped and landed here."

The boat was now run onto the beach, and the party searched the sand for a trace of footsteps. None were found; and while Tom was left in charge of the boat, the others walked around the island, but without seeing a trace of human beings.

"If he's here, he's hidden in the brush," declared Mr. Rogers, as the boat was again reached after the circuit of the place was completed. "And in that case it's useless to search," he added. "We might as well return to the yacht. If the man's here, he'll have to wait the arrival of a chance fisherman; but he won't starve, and the rascal is as safe here as in prison."

As the *Cormorant* resumed her voyage, the boys discussed the strange events of the past twenty-four hours, especially the fate which had overtaken the Portuguese, until Canouan was sighted.

Nothing that resembled the map was seen on this island or on those succeeding it, and late in the afternoon the yacht left Becquia, the last of the Grenadines, astern, and Harry and Paul directed their attention toward St. Vincent, massive, purple, and beautiful across the narrow strait ahead.

Before darkness fell across the sea, the *Cormorant* passed under the walls of the ancient fort which tops the northern headland of Kinstown Bay, and

anchor was dropped before the palm-embowered, red-roofed town.

The custom-house boat had departed and the boys were enjoying the scenery and harbor, when they noticed a rowboat approaching. It was short and chubby, a single brawny mulatto at the oars, and in the stern a white-clad, ruddy-faced little man whose form matched that of the boat so well that both boys burst out laughing.

“Doesn’t he look just like old Santa Claus in tropical clothes!” said Harry.

“Except for whiskers,” agreed Paul. “I’ll bet he’s as jolly as old St. Nick, too. I wonder whether he had the boat built to suit him, or whether he grew to suit the boat.”

“Why, I do believe he’s coming aboard!” exclaimed Harry, as the boat swung around and headed for the yacht.

“There’s no doubt about it,” declared Paul; and, running to the cabin, he called to Mr. Rogers, who was below.

The boat had now reached the yacht’s side; and with a nimbleness which fairly amazed the two boys the little man sprang onto the deck just as Mr. Rogers arrived on the scene.

“Well, well, well!” shouted the stranger jovially. “I’ll bet I know who you are, where ye come from, and all about you. Found that Portugee scalawag

yet? Bet you didn't. Took the launch, too—hey? Well, well! Pirates still a-sailin' the old Spanish Main—hey? Wager ye can't tell who I be."

The funny old man burst into uproarious laughter, until his face grew scarlet, and before they realized it the boys and Mr. Rogers were laughing also.

"I confess you're right," admitted Mr. Rogers at last. "You evidently know who we are and about our adventures in Grenada; but I can't say that I know as much about yourself. I suppose you heard of the Portuguese and launch by cable?"

"True as a trivet," said the other. "Had my course set for Barbados by this morning's mail packet when the cable came in. That's why I'm here. My name's Perkins—'Cap'n Frank,' folks call me—and I'm deelyghted to see ye safe, sound, and in yer right minds after the trip."

Captain Perkins burst into another roar of merriment.

"Well, you certainly *have* surprised us, Captain," said Mr. Rogers, "but I'm more than pleased to meet you. Welcome aboard your own yacht, Captain. But do tell us how you happen to be here. We expected to deliver the *Cormorant* to you in Barbados."

"Over here on a visit," laughed Cap'n Frank. "Expected to be back before you showed up, and when the cable came along I said to myself, 'Cap'n

Frank, you just set down here in Kingstown and surprise the yacht.' And surprise ye I did. How about it, lads?"

"Now," he continued, after his laughter had subsided, "you come straight along to shore with me, and we'll celebrate on dry land. St. Vincent's not the worst place in the world, and I've everything fixed for ye."

All the way ashore Captain Perkins laughed and chattered, and asked the boys a steady stream of questions about their trip, what they enjoyed most, what they'd learned, and what adventures they'd had.

"Fell in a dungeon, did ye?" he exclaimed, when Harry told him of that episode, "and found a pirates' treasure map. Well, well! Lor' bless your hearts! I'm just as big a kid as ever, and I dunno but I'll turn treasure hunter and spend the rest of my days cruising about searching for treasure myself. Plenty of it lying about, too. When we get ashore, you let me see that old chart and I'll tell ye in two shakes where 'tis. Bet ye I do."

Again he roared with laughter.

Once in the town, Captain Perkins hustled them along to a carriage; and after a drive of several miles through the spice-laden night, they drew up before a little bungalow in a charming garden.

"Welcome, all of ye!" he cried heartily, as they

stepped from the carriage. "This is my place. Little plantation I have over here." So saying, he hurried the party up the stairs and into the house.

Supper over, Captain Perkins asked for the map, and after the first glance cried out:

"I told ye I'd know the spot. Just as plain as the nose on my face. Ha, ha! Couldn't miss it in the dark. That's a perfectly good A-No. 1 map o' Trade Wind Key."

"Trade Wind Key!" exclaimed Harry. "Where is it? Is the treasure there?"

"Trade Wind Key's 'way over to looward in San Domingo," answered Captain Perkins. "Little speck o' land in Samana Bay. Been there many a time. Great place for the pirates and buccaneers in the old days. Is the treasure there? Joke's on you, this time, boys. Your old pirate was all right, too. To be sure, the treasure *was* there, but a chap found it 'bout five years ago."

The captain roared again, as if it was the greatest joke in the world.

"Then we'll never find it!" cried Harry dolefully.

"No, sir. But don't be downhearted, lad. Tell ye what we'll do. Come down next winter, and we'll all go on a reg'lar treasure hunt. No fooling. I know a lot of yarns about treasure and sunken galleons and hidden loot; and we'll just cruise about and run some of them stories into their holes. Tell

ye what, lads: We'll start in and follow old Harry Morgan's wake, and see if we can't locate some o' the treasure he hid here and yon. How'll that strike ye?"

"That would be splendid!" cried Harry.

"Hurrah!" shouted Paul. Then he added ruefully: "Perhaps father won't let us go."

"You bet he will," declared the captain; "won't ye, Rogers? You'll come along, too, and we'll have the finest little cruise as ever was."

"Unless something happens to prevent," replied Mr. Rogers, "I'm perfectly agreeable. We'll have to let it stand that way for the present."

The boys were overjoyed at the thought of another cruise the following year, but during the next few days they had little time to give the matter a thought. They rode, drove, tramped, and sailed everywhere about St. Vincent. They visited the magnificent public gardens near the town. They climbed the mountains, hunted in the woods, and saw the vast areas devastated by the eruption. Everywhere they were welcomed and entertained lavishly, for Captain Perkins was known by everyone, and nothing was too good for "Cap'n Frank" and his friends.

Mr. Rogers and the boys were to return direct to New York from St. Vincent, leaving Captain Perkins to navigate the *Cormorant* to Barbados; and

all too soon for the boys the steamer for the States arrived. With many regrets they went on board, accompanied by Pete and Rami; and as the engines throbbed and the whistle roared out its hoarse farewell to the island, "Cap'n Frank" ran nimbly down the gangway and from his bobbing boat far below shouted up:

"I'll expect ye next winter, lads, for our cruise in old Morgan's wake!"

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